

Faith's Triumph  
OVER THE  
FEARS  
OF  
DEATH

Being a practical Improvement of what I have written of the Immortality of the Soul.

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By *Thomas Wadsworth* Minister of the Gospel.

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THE  
EPISTLE  
TO THE  
READER

Reader,

**H**aving been led out (I  
hope by the good hand of  
the Lord) to write a few  
Sheets, for the proof of the Souls

## The Epistle

Immortality, (what the success thereof may be, I am uncertain; but I shall humbly leave that to the blessings of the Lord Jesus, the Head of the Church) and having lately preached a Sermon that hath practical tendency to the improvement of that most concerning Speculation, I enforced my self (upon the persuasions of some Friends) to adjoyn it, which I have here done; but I confess, with such alterations and additions, that few that heard it, may think it the same; but I hope much to thy advantage; for I have therein interwoven a Discourse, the substance

to the Reader.

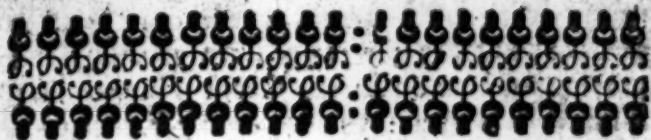
stance whereof I had drawn up  
several years since, for my own  
satisfaction, after I had newly  
recovered a sharp fit of sickness,  
which consisteth in the answer-  
ing my own fears, which assault-  
ed me upon the conceived ap-  
proach of death; I by temptati-  
ons for ought I know may be the  
same with mine; and if so, per-  
adventure, the Lord may bless  
the resolutions given as well to the  
satisfaction of thee, as in some  
measure they have (through the  
mercy of God) been to me.  
Thus leaving thee to the bles-  
sings of his grace, who is able to  
comfort, strengthen, settle and  
establissh

The Epistle, &c.  
*establish thee in the Faith of the  
Eternal Life promised, and joy-  
fully expected by all the sincere  
Israel of God, I Rest,*

*Thy Souls Servant*

*in the glad tydings  
of the Son of God.*

**THOMAS WADSWORTH.**



Phil. 1. 21.

*For me to Die is Gain.*

**I** Chose these Words to write of, because I hoped this Book might meet with a sort of Readers, who make it their great business to obtain a happy close of a sorrowful life with a gainful death, and who hope to put off with their bodies of flesh, their garments of mourning : I know it is otherwise with the men of this world, all the designs of their hearts, are, how they may in an earthly fading prosperity brave it out in this life, and in the mean time leave their poor naked souls to shift for themselves (as they can) at death. I shall have somewhat to say to these men by and by : But at present, I shall direct my words to you, who are longing after another Country, who feel not your selves to be at rest here, nor ever hope to be until you get without these bodies and above this world. You have set your faces Zion-ward, and are resolved for Heaven what ever it cost you. I desire you, my Brethren, to look upon this message which I now bring, as sent you from your Lord to cheer your hearts in your passage home; you would fain be at home, and so you shall be shortly, when death comes it will gain you the satisfaction of that de-

fire ; and let me say farther, you cannot so fervently desire to be there, as your dear Lord is to have you there ; what you are groaning and praying for here on Earth, Christ is interceding for now in Heaven : you are crying, Father, prepare me by thy grace, and then bring me to the sight of thy self and my Jesus in his glory ; and what is it else which your Saviour did of old, and still doth pray for ? *Father, says he, John 17. 24. I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory, which thou hast given me.* And tell me, what are the frequent Messages he sends you by his Ministers, but so many testimonies of his great care and desires of seeing you safely arrived to him, and his glory.

Sometimes he is sending Ministers to tell you which is the way thither, to direct you in it, and to caution you against by-ways, and false-ways ; and what is that but an Argument he is very loth you should by mistake, lose your way, and with your way, your selves, and with your selves his glory ?

Sometimes again, when he sees the way is long and tedious, and finds you begin to tire, then he sends other Ministers to direct you, to lay aside every weight and sin that doth easily beset and clog you, and with importunate Exhortations to perswade you not to wax faint and weary in your minds, but that you would *run with patience the race which is set before you.*

And sometimes again he sends others to hold forth your Garland, and to shew you the Crown in his own hands, who stands ready at the Goal



to place it on your brow so soon as your race is finished : this is that joy before us which our Lord kept in his eye whilst he was running his race, and what he by the Ministry of the Word keeps in his peoples eyes ; and to what end ? but to encourage you to press forward, to put out your utmost strength, not to faint, nor so much as to think of rest, till you sit down and take it on a Princely Throne, which is the prepared place of rest to all that finish their course in the Faith of Jesus.

And this is my work at this time, and the very import of my Message from this Text, is to hold out this Crown before you, which though the text hath wrapt it in the black Cypress of death, wherein its beauty and splendor is somewhat shaded, yet is it no ways hurt or soiled ; as will appear when we have turned aside that vail, as we shall indeavour in the explication of what is contained in the gain of death this Text speaks of.

That I may make my way to the discovery of this gain, I shall crave leave to stay a while in the opening of the context.

The Apostle *Paul* in this Epistle is writing to the Church at *Philippi*, and in this Chap. for news, he tells them, That he was then at *Rome*, and that there he was a Prisoner in Bonds for Jesus Christ : at which he would not have them troubled, for he was not, because this affliction of his, he saw productive of so great good ; for it had two notable effects, both of which did much conduce to the furtherance of the Gospel, *ver. 12.*

The one was, the occasion that was given thereby to the City of *Rome*, and especially to the

Emperors Court to take notice of Jesus Christ; for Christ thereby (whom *Paul* preached, and for whom he was in bonds) became the common discourse of Court and City, *ver. 13.* such was the sottish sleepiness of this benighted sensual world that the still voice of the Gospel in the mouths of its Heralds could not be heard, until the noise of the chains, the reports of the prisons, crosses, deaths, (which its Preachers did with patience to all, miraculously indure) did awaken them out of their deadly sleep. Many in *Rome* would never have thought it worth their while to inquire after Christ, but for *Pauls* Bonds and Prisons; they were his Sufferings more than his Sermons made many of them think that there was something in his Doctrine extraordinary; and therefore put them upon inquiry what that might be.

Another blessed effect that followed from his imprisonment, was this, that it gave courage to many of his Brethren, that before were fearful, the threats of the Adversary had so scared them, that they dared not to wet the foot nor hazard any thing, much less the loss of liberty and life for Christ; but when they saw how cheerfully the Apostle bore his restraint, they waxed confident, they took heart and preached boldly, as he tells them, *ver. 14.* such a powerful influence hath the good example of one upon many, the prudential courage of one Commander is enough to spirit a whole Army. Surely thought the Brethren, these Prisons and Chains are no such affrightful things, which our Brother *Paul* doth so undauntedly suffer.



He tells them farther of another Affliction that was added to his Bonds; and surely the troubles of the Lords people seldome set on them singly, most commonly in Troops, as here on this blessed Apostle, the Devil was not satisfied in getting him thrown into Prison, and in Prison into Bonds; but he raiseth up some pretended friends of Christ, enviously to bespatter him as a false Teacher; these he says did preach Christ out of envy, not that they envied Christ, but envied *Paul*: These Preachers I conceive, were judaizing Christians, who believed in Christ and preacht him, but likewise preacht up the Ceremonial law with him,; they were for the Circumcision of the heart, and also for the Circumcision of the flesh. Now *Paul* was nothing for the Ceremonies of the Law, as believing them all abolished; and therefore the whole bent of all his Sermons was for the exalting of Christ alone, and that the only way to be justified was to believe in him; this these judaizers could not bear, conceiving it derogatory to the Law of *Moses*, and this I conceive was the reason they envied the Apostle, and why they stirred up the people against him: this he accounted an affliction, and truly it is a great one to be brought under reproach among the Churches of the Lord, as the Apostle was, but undeservedly.

But let us see how the Apostle carries himself under this pressing burden of afflictions. After this manner you may perceive him to reason, in that which follows in the Chapter, Well (says he) am now in Prison, and have many Enemies both within and without the Church; the Ro-

mans are my enemies for preaching Christ, and the Jewish Christians they envy me for preaching Christ, and justification by him alone. What will be the event hereof I know not, it may cost me my life, but if it doth, it shall not move me; for I am neither afraid nor ashamed to die, *v. 20.*

According to my earnest expectation & my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness as always; so also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. It was indifferent to him whether by life or death, and if you would know the reason of this indifferency, he gives it you in the following *verse*, *for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*; Christ would gain by his life, for his Church should thereby be edified; and CHRIST would be a gainer by his death, for thereby his truth would be further sealed with his blood; nor would Christ only be a gainer thereby, but the Apostle believed that he himself should be a gainer especially by death; and the reason he gives thereof, *ver. 20.* because upon his departure hence he should be with Christ. This is a seeming Paradox to nature, to prove a gainer by the loss of all, as to outward appearance every man doth at death. There is no principle in man but faith that can fully comprehend this truth; but faith can espy ineffable joy and glory; through that very lamentable thing call'd death, which makes the hearts of men to shrink, their faces gather paleness, their tongues falter, and their flesh about them to tremble.

Having now brought you to the words of the Text; and finding nothing of difficulty in them

that needeth Explication, I shall give you from them this Observation.

That Death, though it doth utterly begger the wicked, yet it is enriching or exceeding gainful to the godly.

There are these three things I shall speak to in the opening of this Doctrine.

1. I will shew you how death doth utterly begger the wicked.

2. What a godly man is.

3. How death proves so exceeding gainful to the godly.

1. I shall speak to the first of these, The wickeds misery, as a shade to set off the more bright colours of a godly mans felicity: the beauty of the Spring, the brightness of a Summers day, the glory of a Princes Palace, are then best understood when they stand compared with the depth of winter, a dismal midnight and a stinking dungeon, such a difference, yea vastly greater will death put betwixt the godly and the wicked.

At death the wicked are undone, utterly undone, eternally undone, begger'd past all possibility of a repair.

This I would clear up to you in three Particulars.

1. Death strips them of all their earthly carnal blessings.

2. And of their spiritual blessings.

3. And to speak their beggery perfect, it strips them of all hopes of repairing these losses.

1. Death strips the ungodly of all their earthly and carnal blessings, it sweeps away all, it leaves them

them not one mercy, nor the hundredth part of a mercy.

Would you see a sad spectacle indeed? one that is miserable to perfection, so far as can be on this side Hell; go not to a begging *Lazarus* at the door of a churlish Rich man, nor to a *Job* scraping his sores upon a dunghill; but go to the bed side of a dying wicked man; there is the man that is truly miserable, perfectly miserable; *Job* and *Lazarus* had their God left them, their uprightness left them, and their faith and hopes for a better state left them; but this wretch hath nothing left but a short breath and a feeble pulse, and stay but a while and death will deprive him of them also. You foolishly talk sometimes, when you have lost an estate, Oh I am undone!, or when you have lost a dear relation, still you are undone! Alas there is none really undone, but a wicked man that is a dying or rather dead. It was a sad knell that *K. Henry* the Eighth rowl'd to his departing soul, when as some Historians says, he cryed out, *All is lost, all is lost*; what he said of himself, every wicked man, hath ground to say, but if you will not, I in the like case, wil for you; when you go hence, *All is lost, all is lost*.

Oh you ungodly of the earth! how are you surrounded with earthly blessings whilst you live here? what a Catalogue of your enjoyed mercies could I give you in? as health, strength, relations, husband, wife, children, friends, pleasant dwellings, soft attire, delicious fare, gold and silver, house and lands, with the gilding titles of worldly honour; in these respects many of you exceed

exceed the godly, But alas poor men, how soon must you leave them all, death is coming, and when its come, will sweep all away; it will not leave thee one mercy of a thousand, no not one.

Either repent now at the call of the Gospel, and cry aloud to Christ in prayer to forgive thy sins and change thy heart, and renew thy life, or else prepare thy self to bid an eternal adieu at death to every thing that is dear to thee here, and despair of ever finding so good when thou gettest hence; think with thy self of saying, farewell, easeful health and strength, I must exchange you for eternal pain, and for a burning fervour as hot as hell; Farewel husband or wife and children, friends and dear relations, I shall never see you more, I must exchange your delightful companies for the presence of an ireful God, a revengeful Jesus, for the society of tormenting and tormented Devils and wicked spirits like mine own: adieu my fair house, my pleasant gardens, my delicious fare, my downy beds, I must leave you all for a restless life in the worst of prisons, loaded with the heaviest chains, entertained with the suffocating poysoning smoaks of sulphureous flames; I am going thither where there is not a blessing to be had, but curses in abundance, nothing else but curses and infernal plagues: Oh what a change will this be, and how shortly will it come! how soon will some disease arrest you, bind your hands and feet, and confine you to your bed? and how soon will death give your souls a summons to the tribunal of God, and your bodies to the grave? tell me then what is become  
of

of all your boasted of enjoyments; alas, both thy self and they are taking wing to fly from each other, never to meet more. Truly Sirs, Hell will bring wicked men very low, it brought the rich man in the Gospel to a drop of cold water, and to less than that; for he could not obtain it. Oh Father *Abraham* (says he) let me have but one drop: no says *Abraham*, there is a gulph betwixt us, God hath fixt it; there is no coming at one another to yield any relief. But oh sir remember, thou hadst thy good things in thy life, thou hadst mercies then, many mercies; God was by them wooing thee that he might win thee to himself, and so bring thee to this place of rest, where thou seest I am with that once despised *Lazarus*; but every thing he gave thee thou didst abuse, thou didst despise the riches of his mercy and long suffering by which he would have led thee to repentance; thy wickedness turned all those blessings into curses, and hardened thy heart as the Plagues of *Egypt* did *Pharaoh*, against thy bountifull God; and therefore art thou now tormented.

Think of this oh you carnal and ungodly men. While you are eating and drinking, and enjoying the pleasures of this life, say thus with your selves, this is my all, and how quickly will this all of mine be gone (if I do not by a timely repentance and conversion to Jesus Christ obtain the favour of God and a portion in the inheritance of the Saints) and then I am undone for ever. See how *Joh* describes the latter end of the wicked, read, tremble, and be not presumptuous, *tub p. 21. 7, 8, &c. The wicked live many years,*  
they



they become old; yea they are mighty in power? Their children prosper, their seed is established in their sight, their houses are safe from fear, they send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance (they have a merry life of it) They take the timbrel and the harp, and rejoyce at the sound of the Organ. They spend their dayes in wealth, and they say to God depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy wayes. Here is wickedness described in its highest rant, and wicked men in the greatest flourish of prosperity. But doth this last long? no, says he, ver. 13. In a moment they go down to the grave (they are gone in a trice in the twinkling of an eye, before they ever thought of it they are gone:) and what follows? ver. 20, 21. His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty; For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, (all the gallantry and delights of his house he hath left behind him, he takes no pleasure in any of them when he is gone) when the number of his months are cut off, in the midst God cuts them off. He leaves a house full of treasures to relations, to his wife, to his children; and there is a great deal of jollity & mirth in the house which he leaves, but all that is nothing to him, for his months are cut off; God in anger hath cut them off, he might have lived longer, but that his wickedness provoked God to shorten his dayes, in his sin he is gone down to Hell, he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty. Oh deadly cup! a cup of wrath, of the wrath of the Almighty! which when drunk down will work like poyson. Oh how will it burn and gnaw, swell and blister thee all over, and cramp every joynt and faculty about thee. What pleasure will

will it be in this torment to think thou were once at ease, and surrounded with worldly pleasures; nay, the remembrance of the former ease will but help to augment thy present torment. Oh consider this all ye that forget God, lest he tear you thus in pieces, and there be none to deliver you. Thus I have shown you how death will begger the wicked of all their outward blessings.

2. Death will begger the wicked of all their spiritual blessings. But have wicked men any spiritual blessings? yea, that they have such as those, which the Apostle says, God bestowed on the Jews, the seed of *Abraham*, *Rom. 3. 2.* *To them he committed the Oracles of God more fully. Rom. 9. 4.* *To whom pertaineth the adoption and the glory, and the Covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises: all those spiritual blessings, those means of grace, those Israelites enjoyed; and yet were they for the most part a graceless people, as the Apostle proves from the complaints of the Prophets against them, Rom. 3. 11.* *There is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understandeth, none that seeketh after God.* Wonderful! that a people should have so righteous a law, and yet they universally so unrighteous, that they should have such excellent Teachers, as *Moses* and the Prophets, and yet none of them understand, none seek after God; one would stand amazed to think what they did with such excellent priviledges; but cease your wonder, I will tell you what they did with them; they did just so with them, as the generality of *England* now do with *Christ*, the Doctrine of the Gospel, the Promises of Heaven, the threatnings of



of Hell, and with the Ministers of Christ, that would fain perswade them thankfully to accept, and wisely to improve them all. What doth *England* do with all these? I will tell you, they shut their eyes, stop their ears, harden their hearts, sear up their consciences; they give ear to the suggestion of the Devil, yield to the lustings of the flesh, entertain the temptations of the world, and so spend their days, some in chambering and wantonness, and excess of riot; others in buying and selling, eating and drinking, marrying and giving to marriage; others in grinding the faces of the poor, stopping the hire of the Labourer, lying and swearing, consening and cheating, heaping up treasures as for the last day. And as a consequence of all this, God is not in their thoughts, Christ is set light by, his commands disobeyed, Heaven undervalued, Hell contemned, and the Ministers of the Gospel hated, reviled, persecuted. Thus did the *Israelites* of old with *Moses* and the Law; and thus for the most part deal my Country men with Christ and the Gospel.

Thus oh foolish sinners and unwise, do you requite God for all these rich means of grace and salvation he hath bestowed on you? Now the light is shining, now Christ is knocking at your hearts, now Ministers are pleading with you, and the spirit is offering you his assistance: if you had a mind to return to Christ, how easily might this turn be accomplished, a little diligence in a daily reading some portion of the Bible, a little serious attention to the word when preached, a few sober thoughts of what you hear or read, with a few humble importunate prayers to the Redeemer

mer of the world to open your eyes, and to give you an understanding heart, what a sudden and a wonderful blessed change might this soon work in you. But alas! such is the damnable sortishness of this wicked world, they had rather than be at this little pains, to hazard all, yea the everlasting undoing both of their souls and bodies. Oh you deaf Adders! how long shall Christ call, and his Charmers charm, and you not hear them? Heark sinners, He that came from Heaven, and shed his blood to make your peace, he calls, he bids you turn from the evil of your wayes and believe in him; and he will give you life, eternal life, he will pardon all your sins, your greatest sins, your most bellish oaths and blasphemies; yea, though directed against himself; he will make your peace, and adopt you children to his Father, fill you with his spirit, and make your hearts run over with joy and gladness, and at death take you to himself and crown you with glory.

But if you will not hear, nor lay these things to heart, then let me tell you death is coming, and that will strip you of all these offers. When death hath closed your eyes, farewell then all Gospel light, it shall never more shine to thee: Christ will then have given the last knock at thy heart, Bibles will be all closed up and sealed, and all Ministers as to you shall be silenced. Whilst you live on earth, though at present you be in an unconverted state, under wrath and condemnation, yet thou art in a possibility of being converted and saved, though you are miserable poor as to your present possession, yet (whilst your day of grace lasteth) you are rich in possibilities;

lities; but when death comes then you are utterly undone, for that will strip you of all possibility of being saved; for as the tree falleth, so it lyeth whether to the North or towards the South: So when death hath laid his axe to your roots and cut you down, if you fall Heaven-ward, there will be your place; if Hell-ward, there you must lie to all eternity. *Moses* and the *Prophets*, and so *Christ* and his *Apostles*, they are only preach'd to you while you live; as *Abraham* in the Parable tells the Rich man, *Thy Brethren* (saith he) *have Moses and the Prophets*. Where were these brethren? in Hell; no, but on Earth, there they enjoy those excellent Teachers, whom if they will obey, they may escape this place: But this was nothing to the Rich man himself that had past his doom, and was lost past remedy. This will be all your cases shortly: Oh you unconverted ones, what say you to this? oh you rebellious children of the rebellious woman! How long will ye despise the long suffering of a gracious God, who waiteth thus upon you, till you do convert that he may heal you? How often shall I tell you that he will not wait long? not a moment longer than the time you live; and oh how short a time is that! If you were once got out of this world, and began to feel the weights of your hellish chains, and to perceive the scorplings of those infernal fires; oh what wouldst thou then give for one offer of grace more! How wilt thou be ready to cry out in the midst of thy heart-sinking despair, What a wretch was I to refuse so great salvation that was (whilst I lived) so frequently offered and so im-

por-

portunately pressed upon me ! I am now come to Hell, and what a change is here ? Instead of Preachers, I find none but tormentors ; instead of the sweet and still voice from Mount Sion in the tidings of Gospel grace, I hear of nothing but the thundering and lightning of mount Sion, so that I tremble and exceedingly quake. That Jesus who once spoke to me as a Lamb, oh how doth he now roar upon me as a Lion ! and he that then sought to win me by his smiles, oh how doth he kill me with his frowns ! for the Lords sake and your souls sake, think of this before it be too late, repent in time and turn with all your hearts to Jesus Christ ; and so your iniquities shall not thus prove your ruine. Thus have I in the second place shewn you how death strips the wicked of all their spiritual blessings.

3. There is another stock, the wicked, whilst they live on earth, conceive themselves to live very happy upon, and that is their hopes ; When they think of any other world, they have nothing to keep up their sadned hearts from sinking, but the airy bladders of vain hopes, notwithstanding all the wickednesses and unrepented debaucheries of their lives, they hope God will be merciful, and all will be well enough at last. But alas ! you poor deluded wretches, when death comes, how miserably will you find yourselves deceived ! Death that will close the eyes of your bodies will open the eyes of your mind, and throughly discover your delusions. Hath not Christ told you that many children of the Kingdom (of God,) that is, Sons and Daughters of the Church on Earth shall be shut out of the Heavens.

Heavenly Kingdom ; How think you then to enter, who are as impenitent and unbelieving as they were ? Hath not Christ told you that in the great day of judgement he will command those to depart from him that had been Prophets in his name, and had cast out Devils in his name, and done many wonderful things ; and why *depart* ? because they had been workers of iniquity ; and what ground then have you to hope to escape that have been workers of iniquity as well as they ? If the Apostle *Peter* tells you, *that the righteous scarcely are saved*, how then can you impenitent workers of iniquity hope to escape ? Poor men ! I beseech you mock not your selves with these defensory hopes ; *for God will not be mocked*. Death will convince you of so much though I may not be able. Doth not *Job* tell you, *That at death the hope of the hypocrite perisheth*. By hypocrites are meant wicked men of all sorts, as well the prophane as the dissembling Professor ; as is well known by those that observe the use of that word by the Prophets ; Wicked men will be hoping as long as they live though they go to Hell with their hopes, but there they will all vanish as dreams when men awake. All the evidences you have now for Heaven are nothing else but groundless hopes, built upon the damnable presumption that Christ and his Apostles may chance to prove false witnesses ; and yet these hopes you hug as precious treasures : But believe it first, if you are only rich in such fancied hopes you are very poor ; if a man hopes he is worth thousands and yet is not really worth a groat ; if one hopes he

is at liberty, and yet is in a dungeon in chains condemned to the Gallows; if one hopes he is in health when he is mortally sick, are these men a whit the richer or the more at liberty, or have more of health for these hopes? nor can your cases (oh you unconverted ones) be a jot the happier, because you hope you are well enough, and shall do as well as any else in another world; assure your selves the black wings of death will brush down all these cobwebs, and the last puff of wind thou breathest will break all these bubbles of vain hopes; perhaps I cannot perswade you so much; but I am confident it will be so, and take heed lest you prove at death the experiments of so sad a truth. Thus have I shewn you in three respects, how death doth utterly begger wicked men.

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## CHAP. II.

**I** Am now come to the second Point I promised to speak to, and that is to shew you what a godly man is, which is the subject of the Text; *for to him only death is gain.*

A godly man (in general) is such an one as the blessed Apostle *Paul* was, who in this Text speaks of himself, *To me to die is gain*: had he not been a truly godly man he could not in truth have said so much of himself; for the blessedness of death is a peculiar Treasure to the blessed of the Lord, and such are all the godly, and none but they.

Now



Now there are several Characters of this great Apostles godliness; three of the more remarkable ones I shall speak to, by which I would have you try your selves, that you may know whether you are godly men or no; and so whether Death will be gainful to you.

1. *Paul* was a converted man; every godly man is a converted man, and to none but such converted ones will Death be gain. We are all born with our backs upon God and his Son Jesus, upon his Kingdom and Righteousness; we must all be converted, and turned about before we can see the face of our God, and our Saviour in peace, or enter into his Kingdom, or partake of his Righteousness; we are not as of our earthly Parents born Children of God; but we are made such by the Gospel working in us a conversion from sin unto God. There are no hopes of pardon of sin, or of refreshment from the presence of the Lord before conversion, upon which the Holy Ghost hath intailed those blessings, *Acts 3. 19. Repent therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.* You see then conversion is absolutely necessary to speak you godly, before you partake thereof Death cannot be gainful.

*Paul* he was now certain it would be gain for him to die; but he was not alwayes so, once he was in such a condition that if he had said so much, it had been but an Argument of his wretched delusion; but now he is confident *Death will be gain*, that is, since God had revealed his Son in him, and had drawn out his heart to close with him,

him, and by Faith to relie upon him : before this (methinks I hear him say) I would not have dyed for a world ; no not then when I was in the highest flourish of my Pharisaical righteousness, I was then but as a gilded post, a dunghill, strowed with flowers, a whited Sepulchre, if I had died then, I could not possibly have escaped the damnation of Hell. I admire the grace of God that I have out-lived that time ; that time wherein I was unconverted, it would have been dreadful for me to have died then. But I am not what I was , I am another man , conversion hath wrought a thorough change in me ; That Jesus I now admire, and love above my life ; yea a hundred lives (if I had them) whom I once did heartily hate to the death ; had I been alive or been present when Christ was apprehended, arraigned, condemned, crucified, I should doubtless have been one of the first that had laid hands on him ; I should have given my vote to his condemnation, and been as deep dyed with the guilt of his blood as I was of *Stephens* when I held the garments of those that stoned him : But now I my self am willing to be apprehended , bound, led as a sheep to the slaughter for his sake, I desire to know nothing but Christ, and preach nothing but Christ and him crucified ; and to die also for this chief reason that I may be with Christ.

Now Sirs, if ever you would have death gain to you, believe it you must be converted as well as *Paul*. Hast thou been hitherto a meer Pharisee, one drest up with external Ordinances, Ceremonies, & traditions of your fathers, one whose religion hath consisted only in a few external

Acts



**Acts of Devotion** or a few moral works of Alms, or Acts of justice, having no other Principle than a love to the praise of men. I tell thee thou must be converted or never hope to have gain by death.

If you have been Cursers, Swearers, Blasphemers, Persecutors of Christ and his Righteousness in the lives of his People, and Dividers thereof, never hope to gain any advantage by death till thou do experience a through conversion: if you have been a sort of ignorant, careless, luke-warm *Galio's*, that have look'd on the matters of religion as indifferent things, and never yet set your selves to a serious believing in Christ and his Promises, and to a humble conscientious Obedience to his Commands, never hope (except you be converted) to shut up your lives with peace; for till then you are wicked, and *there is no peace to the wicked, saith my God.* Death indeed is gainful to the wicked when they are converted from the errors of their ways, but never till then.

2. A godly man with *Paul* is dead to all worldly loves, and is wholly or chiefly taken up with the love of Jesus Christ. Before you come to Jesus Christ by faith, and fix your affections upon him, you are all lovers of the Creatures more than the Creator, meer Idolaters; though you fall not down to them, and pray to them, as the Papists do to Images; yet in your loves you are admirers and adorers of them; one admires the pleasures of chambering and wantonness, another his riches, another his worldly wisdom, his parts and gifts, another his Pharisaical reli-

gious performances they admire them more than God himself, or his Christ, and his righteousness; these they rejoyce in, pride themselves in, trust in, give that honour to, which is due to God and Christ only; every one hath his Idol or Idols in his heart: this is the condition of all the unregenerate of the earth.

**Burnow** a godly man to whom Death shall be Gain, is one that is crucified to the world, and worldly things, and is only or chiefly alive in his love to Jesus Christ; those things which before conversion he admired, now he slights; what he doted on, now he despiseth, as vain empty things, that he takes no pleasure in; just such an one was *Paul*. *I am* (says he) *crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me*; I am just as a dead man laid out as to worldly things; they do not move me, if I have them, I can use them; but if I have them not, I have learnt to be content without them. And so it will be with you all when God hath opened the eyes of your understandings, to behold the excellencies of himself, and his Son Jesus, and the beauties of holiness and righteousness, then will you say of all creature enjoyments, as he did of his Pharisaical righteousness. *Phil. 3. 7, 8. What things were gain to me, I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss; for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. What a brave flight had the Apostle here made above the world! Doubtless Paul had many Friends and Relations at Jerusalem, he was in*

great

great credit with the High Priest, a rising man without question : But when Christ had given his heart a turn, he left them all, and all their loves, and his hopes of preferment by them; these and all other things that he formerly had an high esteem for; now they are all dross to him, I have got Jesus Christ that is worth a thousand of them : He knew his friends and great acquaintance did now hate him, but he cared not, he repented not his change, if it was to do again he would do it. What say you to this my Brethren, here is a man indeed whose heart was taken off the world and fixt on Christ. Are yours so? never hope for a gainful Death till then.

Some do but talk of their willingness to die; you can never be heartily willing to die, until you are dead to the world and worldly Laws, and your hearts inflamed with the love of Christ, and then are you truly godly, and death will be truly gainful.

3. A godly man is one whose conversation is in Heaven, That is, his thoughts are in Heaven, his hopes and heart likewise are there; for his riches are in Heaven, his house is in Heaven, his relations are in Heaven; a godly mans All is there. Ask him what he hath on Earth, and he will tell you, nothing or less than nothing : ask him where then are his blessings? he will tell you, there where my Father is, and my Saviour is, there are my desired blessings, ther's my hopes, and ther's my All; and I wish that I my self was with them.

Ask a carnal man where is his All? He will tell you truly, all I have is at home. In what doth

it lie? perhaps says he, in a little household Goods, in my trading Stock, in a few hundreds of Pounds in Cash, and in my Relations and some earthly Friends; this (saith he) is all I have, all I am worth. These, my Brethren, are the All, the only treasures of the ungodly, upon these they live, with these they converse, these things are earthly, and their conversation is wholly with these. But if it be thus with any of you, assure your selves it must not always be thus with you; if you hope to find a gain in death, you must converse with Heaven, have your conversation there before you can groundedly hope to go there your selves, says the Apostle, Phil. 3. 29. *Our conversation is in Heaven.* He speaks not of himself only, but of the whole Church; especially the sincere and living members thereof, never then hope to go with the Church to Heaven, until with the Church your conversation is there.

Thus have I finished the second Point I promised to speak to, I have shewn you what a godly man is, that you may know whether you be such; from whence you may conclude, That Death will be Gain to you.

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### CHAP. III.

**T**He third Point I promised is this, to shew you, what is this Gain which *Paul* and all Believers perswade themselves of at Death.

I am now fallen into a maze, where I may fear to lose my self: What a difficult task will

It be to explicate the gain of a dying Saint? which indeed is greater than words can express; yea, which is more than the thoughts of man can perceive. How hard a thing is it fully to unfold the beauty of this world, one may see more with one cast of the eye, than explain with ten thousand words: how much more difficult must it be to explicate the beauty and glory of the other; one glance of your eye, my brethren, when you come there will more fully satisfy you with the excellency of that place, than all the words we can use here. If there be such excellencies in the dispensation of Christs Kingdom on earth, if there be such unexpressible mysteries of wisdom and grace in the Gospel, that have never as yet fully entered into the mind of man to conceive; how much more unexpressible must this mystery of the Kingdom of Christ in Heaven and its glory be? *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things that God hath prepared for them that love him.* The heart of man is able to understand, and grasp great things, excellent things; but the things prepared of God for them, that love him, are such that none can apprehend, much less express.

But you may perhaps think if one had been there and seen all, he might possibly <sup>have</sup> been able to express what he had seen. The Apostle tells you the quite contrary; He says (1 Cor. 12. 2.) that he was priviledged with a rapture, that he was caught up to the third heaven, and into paradise, whether in soul only, or how else he was not certain: but this he was sure of, that he heard words,

words, and doubtless saw things also, wonderful and amazing, such as he never saw or heard the like on earth; all was glorious, surpassing glorious, he wanted words to express how glorious.

However, since the Holy Ghost hath spoken in Scriptures many things concerning the blessedness of the godly after death, I shall endeavour to set it forth according to that measure of understanding the Lord hath given me therein, and that in these three Particulars.

1. The Saints at death shall gain Heaven.
2. They shall gain a presence with the Person of Christ.
3. They shall gain a likeness to him.

First, The Saints at death shall gain Heaven. This is a gain indeed, we should heartily say so, if we did but understand what it was. True, by this exchange we shall leave and so lose the earth, if it may deserve the name of a loss; but who will much trouble himself in the loss of a few counters or brass farthings when he hath them made up with Pearls and Diamonds? what is this dirty earth to that bright and celestial Palace? will a sick man think himself a loser in parting with his Hospital for the free and open air, or the Prisoner in leaving his Prison and Chains when he exchanges them for his Princes Court and Chains of Gold? how much less should we that part with Earth for Heaven? for earth is our Hospital where our bodies are often diseased, and sick; and our souls sin-sick; but Heaven is our home  
where



where we shall live in perfect health and ease ; earth is our prison, and our sins are heavier than chains ; Heaven is the palace of our Father, and our King ; and grace and glory will be more adorning to us than chains of Gold.

But still you will say, what is Heaven ? I can tell you what it's called, though I cannot perfectly tell you what it is.

It is called Mount Sion, *Heb. 12.* and [this in allusion to that Mountain in *Jerusalem* where *Solomon's* Temple stood, and wherein God in a wonderful manner dwelt. There says God, *1 Kings 9. 3. Will I put my name for ever ; mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually.* In this Temple was the Holy of Holies, in this Holy of Holies was the Oracle or Mercy Seat, from thence did God answer his people by their Priest in a more immediate manner : while you are on earth, God speaks to you mediately by his Ministers, but in Heaven he will speak to you immediately face to face : now he speaks by such poor weak Instruments as his Ministers ; and oh how sweet are his words, he speaks to you this way ? *sweeter (saith David) than the honey or the honey comb.* But how much more sweet will they be when they come immediately from himself ? If our so dark and confused discourses of the mysteries of the Gospel, do so often melt your hearts, warm your affections and raise your joys, what think you will be those raptures of love and joy you then shall have, when your faculties shall be enlarged, and God himself shall be your immediate Teacher, how fully and plainly will he lay open his eternal designs of love, and na-

ravel all those difficulties in the mystery of our Redemption, our partial ignorance whereof we are now bewailing. This is that place where God hath put his Name; Mount Sion was the mountain of God, it bore his Name and enjoyed his Presence; but yet this was but as a shadow: it is Heaven that is the real and substantial mountain of God, where he displayeth the excellencies of his glory for ever; here is his eye and heart, and self continually. That old mount Sion is now deserted of God, the Temple ruin'd, and that glorious Oracle therein pull'd down; but this Mount Sion shall never have end, nor God ever cease to manifest himself therein, or you ever cease to enjoy those manifestations.

Secondly, Heaven is called the new *Jerusalem*, (*Heb. 1. 2.*) and this in opposition to the old *Jerusalem* the chief habitation of the seed of *Abraham*: This old *Jerusalem* was once called the City of God, the place where his most beloved people *Israel* dwelt; hither it was the Tribes went up, the Tribes of the Lord unto the testimony of *Israel*, to give thanks to the name of the Lord, there were set the Thrones of judgment, the Thrones of the House of *David*, *Psal. 122. God strengthened the bars of her gates and blessed the children within her. He made peace in her borders, and filled her with the finest of the wheat, Psal. 147. 13, 14.* If this old *Jerusalem* was so blessed a place, what must needs be the new? that was but a type, a shadow, this the substance: In that City dwelt many godly; but for the most part there were more wicked, but in Heaven there is not one wicked, but all godly; there



there is not an Angel but what is holy, nor a Spirit but what is the Spirit of a just man ; what a comfort is it to be the Member of a godly Family on earth, or of a heavenly Congregation ? if godliness renders Families and Congregations so sweet , how sweet must the society of Angels and Saints be in Heaven, where grace is in its highest elevation ? what is it but ungodliness that renders Families and this World but as Prisons, as a howling wilderness and a land of darkness. But comfort your selves, when death comes you shall be no longer molested with such troublesome companions, you shall be taken into Paradise where are *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, and this blessed Apostle with all their deceased brethren ; no unclean thing or person ever entered there. Every one that there you meet will be admiring God and the Lamb, and that grace which brought them thither.

This is that City, whither all the Tribes, the Tribes of the Lord go up to worship ; God hath strengthened the Bars of her Gates, that no Enemy shall enter. The Devil had permission to enter the earthly Paradise to tempt and work the ruine of that pair of innocent inhabitants ; but he shall never enter this Celestial Paradise to work any such like mischief. Peace shall be within her walls, and all her children are blessed ; God shall feed them with Angels food, and there shall they keep an everlasting jubilee. What say you my Brethren and fellow Travelers, is it not good being there ? nay, must not the way be sweet wherein you are walking, that leads to so blessed a City as this is ? have patience

ence but a while, a few months or years will convince us that all this is true. Let us at present be content to dwell in Tabernacles with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, since with them, as Heirs of the Promise, we are looking for a City which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God; our Houses and Cities here are unsettled as without foundations; the wind can blow them down, the fire can burn them, time consumes them, or we our selves can demolish and remove them.

But Heaven is a City that hath Foundations, every Stone whereof with its pearly Walls and Gates and Mansions, are immovably fixt by the eternal Decree of God, as no moth can corrupt, nor no thief steal its riches; so neither can any wind, or fire, or time, stir, burn or waste any stone or golden tile of its splendid Mansions; and no wonder it is so glorious and permanent, when God himself by way of eminency, is called its Builder and Maker. God hath built this inferior visible world, and so beautifully enamel'd it with variety of pleasures, with which we are so taken, that oh how difficult a thing it is, to persuade us to be willing to go out thereof; and yet God never intended when he built this that it should continue long. Now if there hath been so much cost of wisdom and goodness laid out in the building of this which was but to last for a time, what must be that manifold wisdom and multiplied goodness which the great God hath laid out upon this City above, which he intended should endure to all Eternity, and proportionably how great must be the beauty, riches, glory, and majesty thereof? Surely

Surely this world where now we live, is but as some out-houses to that heavenly Palace; for what almost hath it been from the beginning, but as a brothel House, where man (almost as soon as made) was tempted and overcome to leave God his Husband, and to commit spiritual whoredom with the Creature? what hath it been but a scullery wherein a deal of sinful, filthy dirty work hath been performed? a meer Shambles, wherein God hath permitted his dear Children, yea, his only begotten Son to be butchered, a meer stable, where (excepting a very few) none but unclean beasts have inhabited. Now if the eternal God-head that made this world, and knew when he made it, that it would be so abused, and notwithstanding this, did so bespangle its roof with Sun and Stars, and laid its flowry Foundation in such a pleasant, useful fruitfulness; Certainly when he erected Heaven, which he intended for none else, but his dear and beloved Children; certainly (I say) that place must needs vastly surpass this in glory.

And if Heaven must needs so far exceed the glory of this world, how much more must it exceed the beauty of our little houses wherein we dwell? which but some Carpenter or Mason built. Alas poor men! surely you will not compare them with the Almighty, or their skill with his: when they have built your Houses with the greatest cost and skill, suppose they had laid your Flores with Plates of Gold, hung your walls with the finest Arras, with the richest imbroidery, bespangled throughout with the rarest Pearls, and the most shining Diamonds; and to all this, let the

the rest of the Furniture be proportioned ; I say such a house as this is no more, if but compared to this structure of Heaven and Earth wherein we at present dwell, than a child's house which he makes of painted Cards is to the most beautiful and magnificent Temple which *Solomon* built to the honour of the God of Heaven : and if it bears no greater a proportion to this worlds glory, what do your Houses, though most splendid, bear in proportion to this City in the Heavens, which is not the workmanship of men but of God.

Oh my Brethren, did we believe this ; how easily might God perswade us to exchange ! But oh foolish childish Creatures ! though we know all this, yet how loth are we to go to the enjoyment of this place when God doth call us. *Mez* thinks my soul and yours whilst I speak of this place, should presently cry out, would we were there to see the truth of all this we now do but speak and hear of ! Well, my Brethren, it is our mercy, if we are not willing that God will fetch us to himself, whether we will or no ; when he hath finished his work of grace in us here, we shall not after that stay many minutes out of this glory.

Lastly, Heaven is called our Lords joy (*Mat. 25. 21.*) *Well done good and faithful servants, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord ;* that is, enter thou into Heaven : again, so it is called, *Heb. 12. 2.* Where it is said, *That Jesus looking to the joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, and despised the shame.* By joy is there likewise meant Heaven.

That must needs be a blessed place that is so  
full

full of joy; nay, that is joy it self, as if it was nothing else? and such is Heaven, they then that leave this earth so full of sorrow and sadness as we find it; and exchange it for Heaven, must needs be great gainers.

How can it choose but be a joyful place where there is no sin the cause of all sorrow? where sin is not only pardoned, but perfectly cured, and all its cursed consequents perfectly removed, where there is no Devil to tempt, nor flesh to betray, nor alluring objects to insnare, nor any weak graces to make a faint resistance.

*David* hath there no cause that his eyes should run down with tears night and day, because men keep not the Law of God: nor is the righteous soul of *Lot* vexed continually, because of the unrighteous deeds of the wicked *Sodomites*: nor hath *Jeremiah* any more cause of writing a Book of *Lamentations* for the sins and captivity of his people; nor the blessed Apostle of bedewing his Epistles with tears, because of the corruption of any members of the Church, whose bellies were their gods, who minded earthly things; and were enemies to the Cross of Christ. For in Heaven is a Church where every member is pick't & cull'd; it is a separated Church without the guilt of Schism, it is a Royal Vine without any dead or fruitless Branch upon it; it is a Society without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, with whom God shall never be offended, nor Christ rebuke or threaten to unchurch, or to send again into a wilderness.

Here are no wicked prophane neighbours to scoff and scorn them, nor no ignorant zelots to

be offended at their liberty, nor no superstitious Persecutors to hate, imprison, or banish them; for *Paul* hath here obtained his desire, when he wish'd that all were cut off that troubled them.

If the bountiful God hath been and is so good to the wicked, even whilst they are in a course of rebellion against him, as to do them good and give them Rain from Heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness, as *Paul* saith he is, (*Acts 14. 17.*) How far more kind must he needs be to his Children that perfectly bear his image in the Heavens, surely with more abundant joy and gladness must he fill their hearts!

If God is so indulgent to his people whilst they are on earth, to give them the consolation of his Spirit, and fill them through believing with joy unspeakable and full of glory; and thus while they are but partly serving him, and partly *striving* against him? Oh with what more transcendent joy & glory will he fill them, when their faith is swallowed up in vision, and when every thing that should obstruct their joys is perfectly removed. Heaven is the Bride-chamber where the Bridegroom is always present, and who can, whilst he is by, wear sorrowful looks, or entertain any grief of heart?

Here it is that Christ marries his Bride, and here his Father entertains his penitent prodigal Sons with musick and dancing; Here are the Songs of love and Hallelujahs of free grace; this is the new *Jerusalem*, not as the old which yet was called the joy of the whole earth; but this joy may



may be call'd of the whole creation, while I write and you read of these things, what cause have we to cry out with *David, Psal. 120. 5. We is to us, that we sojourn in Mesecth, that we dwell in the tents of Kedar!* what is this earth but a *Babim*, a habitation of Weepers; and yet such is our folly (which certainly must spring from the infidelity of our hearts) that we cannot endure the thoughts of departing hence, though it be to our Masters joy. God would bring us not to *Zoar*, a little City in the plain, but to the new *Jerusalem*, seated on the Mount of God; and yet how do we linger in this *Sodom*: He would lead us into our *Canaan*; but we choose this wilderness, what inexcusable folly is this? the Lord pardon us, and cure us of it.

2. We shall gain by death a presence with the glorious Person of *Jesus Christ*.

This is the only reason the Apostle (*Phil. 1. 23.*) mentions, why he desires to depart hence, it is that he may be with Christ; and the very same reason he gives of his desire to be absent from the body, *2 Cor. 5. 6.* it is, that then he should be present with the Lord. He did verily believe that *Jesus Christ*, God-man was personally in Heaven; that he that was once on the Cross between two Thieves, was now on a Throne amidst ten thousand times ten thousand Angels, that his very head, which once was crowned with thorns, was now crowned with glory, that he that was despised, scoffed by men, was now worshipped by the whole Host of Saints and An-

gels. All this he did verily believe to be true, and therefore he desired to die, that he might get to see all this : and if surely our faith were so strong as *Paul's*, our 'desires in this respect would be no less fervent.

There were many other glories to behold in Heaven, but they were all nothing in compare to Christ. He would fain see him that was once praying, sweating, and bleeding for him, who had compassion on him when he was an ignorant blasphemer and persecutor, who met him in his journey to *Damascus*, and shone with such amazing light about him, and who might as well have then struck him dead as struck him down ; who then chose him to be an Apostle, and instead of giving him the lowest place in Hell, as a punishment for his blasphemy, did advance him to the highest place in his Church. *Paul* would fain see him, who had accompanied him in all his travels, stood by him in the throng of all his Enemies, delivered him from many dangers and deaths, and comforted him in all his tribulations. No wonder the Apostle had so great a mind to see Christ, who had been so great a friend unto him, as all this speaks him.

Doct. Christ in his Throne, Christ in his Glory is without doubt a very lovely in-ravishing sight, a most taking thing. Christ himself knew it would be so, when he desired of his Father that his Disciples should be with him ; and why with him ? that they may behold my glory ; as if he had said, my Followers (it is true) do love me, I am precious to them, and they do honour me : but Father I pray thee take them into Heaven, that they may see how much thy love to me exceedsb  
theirs

beirs; and how much that glory thou hast given me doth exceed all their present admirings of me.

Christ was glorious when transfigured on the Mount, *Mat. 17. 2.* when his Face did shine as the Sun, and his Raiment was as white as the light. Christ appeared gloriously to John in a Vision, *Rev. 1. 13, 14.* His head and hairs were as white as snow, his eyes as a flame of fire, his feet like fine brass as if they burned in a furnace. But what is all this to the glory he now wears in Heaven, to which no mortal eye can approach. Christ transfigured, Christ in a Vision was seen by mortal men; but Christ in his heavenly glory can be seen by none but such as are immortal.

There it is where Christs eternal power and God-head is most manifest; there is no Socinian in Heaven, when all see him set on that undivided Throne of his glorious Father, and likewise see all the Angels and Arch-Angels to worship before him.

There also it is that the glory of his humane nature is most perspicuous: The man Jesus is not there numbered with sinners; who doth there call him Wine-bibber, or say he hath a Devil? who sees not the innocency and unspotted beauty of the divine Soul of that Saviour now he is in his exaltation: There our Solomon is in all his glory; the Robes of his Humanity smells of Myrrhe, and all the Virgins of that Kingdome love him. How is that doleful question sweetly changed; from, *Was there ever sorrow like mine,* into, *Was there ever glory like mine.*

Heaven indeed is a glorious place; but Christ is the top of all those glories, of all the Pyramids

of honour he is the highest, the sweetest Rose and fairest Lilly of all that mountain, and of all the Sons of God he is the most beloved; he is the great King of that Royal City, He is the greatest and best of beings there, both by nature and decree, as being the Eternal Son of God by nature, and the King of Saints and Head of Principalities and Powers, Thrones and Dominions by Decree.

There I say sits Jesus at the right hand of the Majesty on high, that illustrious King of Saints, and by the Fathers designation the absolute Monarch of Heaven and Earth, never was Crown besflowed with such authority and power as his; and never were those flowers better blown and spread than as worn by him.

Oh my Brethren could we but conceive the glory of the Court he keeps, and understand the manner of administering the affairs of that Kingdom, how strangely should we be surprized? All the affairs of Heaven, Earth and Hell do come before him, which he governeth by steady and unerring Counsels. All the Plots of Hell and the Counsels of the Courts of Princes, when combined against his Church on Earth, lie all naked and open before him there, which he either prevents, or if not, he over-rules to his own glory, and his peoples good. This is the Court which is more throng'd with business than all the Princes Palaces of the world being put together; hither daily comes the cries of sin for vengeance, the prayers of the Saints for mercy, and their praises for acceptance: and how can we but stand and wonder, to see what sudden and yet right-

righteous dispatches, every one receives. Think not my brethren, that your Lord sits idly there, only to be gazed at and praised by the standers by. Such an honour as that would rather become a Statue than this Prince of Life and Glory. Christ is not placed in Heaven only for shew, but for use also : though the Sun in the Firmament be a pleasant thing to see, yet the bravery of that Creature lies rather in its influences than in its looks. It is not the external pomp of Christs Person only; but the influences of Sovereign perfections that speaks him wonderful ; they are the influences of his love which makes that Paradise above to blossom, and causeth there in an everlasting Spring and Summer, the influences of his wisdom, mercy, grace, power, that gives being, life, vigour, beauty, strength to his Church on Earth, and the influences of his justice and severity on the damned, makes hell to be hell, unto them : what would this Earth do without its Sun ? all things would wither and die away ; and without the invigorating influences of God and the Lamb, Heavens glory would fade, the Churches joy on earth would die, & hells fire would go out.

God hath placed the Government on his shoulders, and he bears it there, and will so do until he gives it up again unto his Father, as he will at the consummation of this world. In the mean time it is he directs and governs all. What are all the Angels in Heaven, but so many glorious Servitors that wait upon his Throne, that go and come, and either are employed in his Affairs in Heaven or Earth for the welfare of his Church, as he commands ; all their Orders and Commissions

they take from him, all the service (my brethren) we have from those excellent Creatures, it is both by his Command and his Direction.

It is he that sets up all the Kings on Earth, continues them or displaceth them as he pleaseth, and therefore on his Vesture and on his Thigh a Name is written, *KING of KINGS, and LORD of LORDS*, to signifie his power over them: nor is there a Church on Earth but he hath planted, when he would gather a people in any Town, City, or Kingdom, it is he sends the Spirit, he chuseth the gifts, and sends the Minister or Ministers whom he pleaseth, and blesteth their Labours, according to the Council of his own will, his eye and heart is always upon them, and his powerful and gracious influences are always with them, especially those that love him, to direct, counsel, comfort, strengthen, and in case of Persecution, either to protect them from sufferings, or to support them under them.

Who is it that hears or reads these lines, that is not willing, nay earnestly desirous to quit this world to fly above, that he may see this Jesus; this absolute and incomparable Monarch of both worlds? who will not justifie this blessed Apostles choice, that he had rather die than live, that he might be present with him? and who will not now say, that a Saint is a gainer by going to Heaven.

But yet my brethren, this is not all that, which will advance the gain hereof in your esteems, is the consideration of those sweet relations he  
stands



stands in to you; this Jesus, this Prince of life and glory, this universal Monarch is your Lord, your Husband, and your Head; you are his willing Subjects, his Bride, his Members; you know we do not use to rejoyce in our Friends and Relations only for their beauty and good parts; but because they are related, because he is my Husband or my Wife, my Child or my Parents; therefore we love them, they love us, delight in us, own us, care for us; therefore we love them.

So Christ loves us, not only because we are Creatures, but because we are his new Creatures; because we love him, trust in him, own him, profess him, because we are reproached, scorned, and are willing to suffer, and if need be die for him. And what think you, will not the consideration of the like respects heighten your rejoycings in him when you are in Heaven? where you shall be able to say, that crowned inthroned King, is my King, my Saviour, Head and Husband; there sits he who loved me, and died for me, and washed my garments white in his blood; There is he that sent his Ministers to teach me, and his Spirit to open my understanding to help me to perceive their teachings to soften my heart, to humble and convert me, to wo and win, and marry me to himself. How often had I been overcome with temptations, had he not assisted me with his sufficient grace, and magnified his power in my weakness? and as often had I sunk under despair from an apprehension of my sinfulness, had he not carefully watched me, and secretly put his everlasting arms under

under me, and in a still voice whispered to my heart, that my sins were forgiven. How can these thoughts of him, when thou beholdest him in Heaven, choose but blow up the glory of his countenance, and make it more transcendently shine in thy eyes?

Think it not strange, my brethren, that I so magnifie the gainful injoyment you shall have of the personal presence of your blessed Lord in the Heavens: Alas, how short are these words of the thing it self, which exceeds all thoughts! You see the Apostle singles him out from all the host of Heaven, and makes the sight of him, the only, at least, the chief motive of his desire of being there: and truly what can there be in that Kingdom in compare to him (except his glorious Father and Holy Spirit who are one with him) that is worth the seeing.

True, there are Angels and Saints, who though they be excellent, pleasing Society, vastly superiour to any we ever enjoyed on earth; yet how much inferiour are they to him?

For what are Angels, how ever distinguished by their different degrees and orders? It is our Lord Jesus that made them all; they are but Vessels (though of honour) of his own making; and what is the Vessel in compare to him that made it? he made them all, sustains them all; he is their Head, and he doth govern them, 1 *Colos.* And they all own him, praise him, and worship him as such, they had never been, or else had laps'd with the many of their society into sin and misery, had not he upheld them.

Christ is the first and the last, they comparatively

tively were but of yesterday ; Christ is King, they are but his ministring Spirits ; Christ is the Lord of the Family, they his menial Servants ; they wear the livery of his love and favour as well as we ; and they would quickly wear out all their glory into rags, took he not perpetual care to keep and maintain them whole.

True, they are excellent Creatures, and love us who are of the Church (of their Lord) on earth entirely ; but it cannot be said they love us half so much as Christ himself doth. It was Christ and not they, that took our nature, was made flesh, a curse, and suffered death, and now is in Heaven to intercede for us, and to prepare that place for our arrival thither. Though Angels will be glad to see us there ; yet it exceeds their power either to lead us through this wilderness thither, or to open the Gates of that Kingdom, and let us in, or give us the possession thereof : it is Christ only (that hath the Keys of *David*, who openeth and none shutteth,) who can do all this. And when we are let in, what are they all to him ? they are but the pinks of that Garden, he is the sweet and full blown rose ; they are but inferiour plants, he is the Tree of Life ; they are but stars, he is the bright Sun that enlightens, warms, inlivens all, and makes it there a continual day. Oh no wonder, that since Jesus Christ hath so great a preheminance above them, that both *Paul* and so we also that believe should principally desire heaven for his sake !

And if Angels, my brethren, are so far below him, what are the Spirits of just men there in compare to him, which our modesty must think

to be a little lower than they ? Though it be most true, they are a sweet Society, and their company must be desired by us ; for it is one of the promised felicities of that place, that we shall lie down with *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob*. If they were accounted the excellent of the earth by *David* while they were below ; how much more excellent must they be thought to be above, where they are made most perfect. But still what are they in a compare to Christ ? they are but the adopted Sons of God, Christ is the begotten and Eternal ; Heaven is Christs by birth and merit ; it is theirs only by purchase and donation ; they had never been there had not Christ loved and died for them, had he not converted, sanctified, pardoned, and brought them thither ; and what comparison can there be betwixt the saved and the Saviour ? they are but the Patients of a diseased Hospital, newly cured, and what are they in compare, to their all-wise, tender, and generous Physician, who cured their wounds by his own, and stanch'd their blood by his, and perfectly cured them by his own skill, and at the expence of his own life. These Spirits, alas poor souls ! they are but beggars advanced by the royal will and power of this glorious Prince, newly taken off the dunghill of sin and temptations upon the earth, found and pickt up in the high ways, hedges and streets of this world, newly washt and clothed, deckt and adorned at the cost of this Jesus, Prisoners newly taken out of Prisons and chains, and brought into the presence of this King of Saints. But what are they in compare to this King himself, who knock'd  
off

off their chains, and opened their Prison doors, and advanced them to those honourable Places in his Palace, where they are Kings and Priests unto their God; yet they have no Crowns but what he gives them, nor robes but what he puts on, nor joy, but what beams from his own lovely self. Who can hear or read of this, and not cease his wonder, that the Apostle should pass by them and pitch on Christ as the only motive, he was willing to die, and go to Heaven? and who is it but must be forced to believe that he that gains all this by death, but he must be a great gainer.

But how short is this honour which I ascribe to Christ in compare to that which he deserves, and indeed he hath? but let me farther say to you that believe so much as this, as Christ did to *Nathanael*; Verily when you arrive at Heaven, you shall gain more by the sight of Christ than all this comes to. So much at present shall serve for the Second Particular of the godly mans gain by Death, he shall gain a presence with the glorious person of Jesus Christ.

### CHAP. III.

**T**Hirdly and Lastly, the godly man by death, shall not only gain a presence with Christ, but a likeness to him.

*When I awake with thy likeness I shall be satisfied,* saith David, *Psalm. 17. 15.* this is an awakening after the sleep of death, so saith the Apostle *John*,  
Epist.

*Epist. 1. 3. 2. We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* This appearance of Christ the Apostle speaks of, is that appearance of his at the last day; when our likeness to him in our whole humane nature both of body and soul will be compleat and perfect; But yet we shall bear a likeness in Spirit to his divine Soul before that time, even as soon as our souls awaken in the other world.

When our souls get into that Paradise (which they shall as certainly do, as the converted soul of the deceased Thief did that day he died,) we shall not be meer spectators of that glory but partakers of it, we shall not only draw the curtain, and go in to look about us, but shall be set up there as Stars to shine with the rays of the Son of Righteousness; and as the Sun doth beget its likeness on the Looking-glass or Waters on which it shineth; so will the shinings of the Lord Jesus on our souls there, beget a likeness in them to himself.

As First, we shall be like him in internal glory, in the excellencies of spirit, there is a pulchritude of soul as well as body; and that is the perfection of wisdom, holiness, righteousness, meekness, and all other graces in the heart.

Here *Plato* that divine Philosopher might have his wish; for vertue will be most visible, and will enamour all that see it. The imperfections of our graces here, are not only our weaknesses, but our shame and sorrow; but there all these weaknesses shall be raised in power, and all our shame and sorrow shall vanish. How narrow are our understandings now? and how difficultly



do they receive the truths of God ; though Christ teacherh us plainly, leisurely ; though he distills truth into us, drop by drop, as we do water into a narrow-mouth'd Vessel ; but then when that faculty will be enlarged, it will receive the most sublime truths as fast as Christ can pour them in ; it will be as easie for you then to know, as it is now for your eyes to see. You will be full of knowledge, light will overspread your souls, and beget the perfect image of God, and his Son upon your hearts, which consists in righteousness, and true holiness. You will never complain of want of love to Christ, or a chearful willingness to do his will, or of a delight in his Person or his Service : The Image of God that was lost by sin, is now perfectly restored, from whence it will be as natural and easie to do the things that please him, as it is for the eyes to see, the tongue to tast, and for the legs of the healthy body to walk. What is your greatest trouble now, but that you are so unlike your Saviour ? Oh you cannot be so holy, nor so humble, there is such a mixture of sin with grace ; the black jaundies of ignorance and weakness, doth so sully your complexions that you are apt to fear there is no soundness in you ; but those distempers then will be perfectly cared, and your complexion changed, all the graces will be seen in your very looks, and felt in your hearts, you will find nothing but holiness in you, you will relish nothing but the things of God, and all the workings of your souls will be towards him.

O blessed gainful change, who would not suffer a few griping pains, and restless nights, some few

few sick fits, and at length two or three deep fetcht gasps (and death is no more) to gain so happy an alteration of our souls, as this doth come to: But,

Secondly, You will gain a likeness to him in that freedom you shall enjoy from the temptations and many evils you groaned under whilst you were on earth.

Oh what a disquieting world is this we dwell in? our Lord found it so, and no wonder if we do: When our Saviour was but in his Cradle; that bloody Butcher *Herod* would have brought him to the shambles. What was his whole life but a continual skirmish with the Devils and wicked men? to repell the temptations of the one, and the provocations of the other; was his daily employment: who ever endured the contradictions and blasphemies of sinners more than he? and who was it that so often preacht with the hazard of his life as he? who was ever more shamefully spit on, so scornfully crowned, so despitefully whipped, and at length suffered a more shameful death than our Lord Jesus?

Though (it's true) he never sin'd, nor ever felt the anguish of a guilty conscience; yet to his cost he felt the burthen of our sins imputed; which made him cry, and groan, and pray, & in an agony, sweat blood it self; and withall upon the Cross underwent the eclipse of the countenance of his Father, and the absence of his Supports.

This was his condition on Earth; But what a difference is there betwixt Christ now in Heaven and what he was here; when he had pass'd this vail of tears and got up that mountaine of joy?

How

How triumphantly doth he speak in a Vision to John, Rev. 1. *I am Alpha and Omega* (saith he) *the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty,* and ver. 18. *I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I live for evermore, Amen. And have the Keys of Hell and Death.* What a majestick stile is here! Christ doth not look and speak as he did on Earth, he is now Christ exalted, he was then Christ humbled, he hath born away our load of sin, and laid it down when he finished his sufferings, and now he is at rest; he was once suffering and dying, but now he is alive, he shall live for evermore; and when we, my brethren, have run our race, and kept the faith, and finished our course, we shall lay down the burthen of our sinful flesh, and get clear of that croud of temptations that throng'd us here, and be at rest with him.

What with our own, or our relations sicknesses, what with their dying, or our fear of their death; what with the decay of Trade, the breaking of our Debtors, the firing of our Houses, the wrecks of our Ships at Sea, and the fear of our Impoverishment, what with the hatred and malice of our Neighbours, their lyes and slanders, what with the threats and cruel rage of Persecutors; and above all, what with the ignorance and infidelity of our minds, the perverseness of our wills, the inclinations of our affections to earthly delights and fleshly pleasures, with the difficulty of restraining them; what a wearisome toilsome life is this? if perhaps sometimes we have a lifting up, and like a wave of the Sea, are ready to embrace the Heavens; we have almost

as certainly a casting down, and are ready to think our selves in the belly of Hell. *Paul* had no sooner come out of his rapture, but he straight received the humbling prick in the flesh, lest he should be exalted above measure, that high spirited wine of Heaven joy, is too strong for our weak heads and hearts. But in the mean time, what a sad state do we now live in, where joys and strong consolations are reckoned amongst our dangers, and sorrows, and afflictions are accounted our wholsom food.

Sufferings here are not only our debts, but our conveniences; it became *Christ*, for our sakes, to be made perfect through sufferings and so to enter into glory: and if sufferings became the Head, why should they not the Members? how would the rust of sin and security gather on us if it were not for the sharp files to clear it off? the life and rigour of our graces would be lost, at least grow languid, if it were not for the continual exercise of temptations; *Cato* would not have the Senate demolish *Carthage*, when they had taken it, lest the *Roman* valour should want a whetstone. Souldiers lose their courage in their Quarters, when they grow valiant in the Field: you had never heard the fame of *Abrahams* faith, *Josephs* chastity, *Moses* his meekness, *Jobs* patience, *Pauls* untired zeal, if they had not met with temptations and very great tryals.

You see then, my Brethren, whilst we stay on earth, it is necessary that we suffer; and since there is no sufferings but are at present grievous, how delightful then should the thoughts of death be to us, which will gain us a likeness

to Christ in a perfect freedom from sufferings.  
Oh if you and I could believingly lay these things to heart, how would they antidote us against the fears of death, and help us to account of the hour of death as the happiest hour ever yet befell us.

Having thus finished the doctrinal part of the Text, wherein I have shown you what is the wicked's loss, and the godlies gain at death; and withall what is a godly man, or how he may be known; by which you may know whether death will be gain to you.

I shall now come to apply the whole in a Use of Exhortation to the Godly.

*Use.* Is it so gainful to a Godly man to die, as I have proved? shall he immediately in Spirit ascend to Heaven? shall he enjoy the glorious personal Presence of Christ? and shall he then be like him? vse.

Let me then exhort thee, if thou art a hearty lover of God; who art my Reader, when thy God and Father calls thee hence by death, make no delays, thankfully accept the call, willingly resign thy spirit into his hands; for it is infinitely to thy advantage, as I have demonstratively shewn thee.

To add greater Arguments to perswade thee than I have, is impossible; more I might, but greater I cannot; for if to be with Christ, and to be like him in the Heavens, will not prevail upon thee, I know not what to say except it be to hide thee. Let the wicked fear and tremble at death, why shouldst thou, who hast the sting of



thy death which is sin taken away; thy grave perfumed with thee once buried, but now raised body of Jesus Christ, and a Paradise prepared for the reception of thy Spirit? Tell me if thou art not willing, what is the reason of thy unwillingness, if thou hast any let me hear it? Methinks I see thee look as if thou wast perplexed, what makes thee blush and hang thy head, as if thou hadst some scruples to resolve, some objections to be answered, and yet darest not tell me what they are? But let me persuade you to open these your doubts to me, perhaps the Lord may please to make use of me, to answer them, which may be to thy comfort all thy days; if thou wilt not tell me, I will take the boldness to conjecture that the Reasons of the fear of death may be some of these following,

*1. The first pretended Ground of the fear of Death.*

Perhaps sayst thou, it's true, I am afraid to die; but have I not a just ground to fear: is it nothing to see to the end of my self, to be a looker on while I behold my self withering and dying? Hath not nature it self taught me to seek the preservation of my being, and to abhor its dissolution. Short life, how vain a thing art thou! whose thread as soon almost as fixt to the spindle of time, is straight spun out and cut off by death? there is ground enough to be troubled at death, if it was for no other cause but this, that it puts an end to my life.

*Ans.* But tell me thou gracious Soul; why art thou so fond of this life? is it because it is a



gift of God? let me tell thee if thou art willing to die, when dead, God will give thee a better; what if thy earthly Father had given thee a Counter, and afterwards should offer to exchange it for a piece of Gold? could any thing but childishness excuse thy refusal? why thy life in Heaven that thy God offers, doth more exceed this life on Earth, than a piece of Gold doth a brass Counter. But what if it be a gift of God, and thou therefore oughtest to praise it whilst thou hast it, and improve it to his glory: is it not likewise as reasonable that thou shouldest willingly surrender it when the Giver remands it? Shouldst thou not with holy *Job*, bless God taking as well as giving? And dost thou not know that God gave it thee but for time, and a short time too; and if thou wert so wise as thou shouldst be, thou oughtest to count it thy felicity, that it is so short; for it is a life of sorrows, and who in his wits will complain that his sorrows are lengthened? But (sayst thou) it is a life that hath its pleasures too? I will grant it, but are its pleasures to be compared to these that are in Heaven? is Earth like Heaven? is Christ in those glimmering discoveries he makes of himself in the Gospel, like Christ in the display of his noon-tide glory? and is thy soul so like him in wisdom, holiness, joy and peace here as it will be above, when it is inrolled amongst the Spirits of just men made perfect? do but firmly believe what I have said of Heaven, and thou wilt be ashamed to say, that the pleasures of this life are to be compared to the pleasures there.

But oh childish fond soul! why so loth to

make an end of a fading life? God is thy Sovereign, and doth command thy willingness; art thou a Subject, and more than that, a Child to thy Sovereign Lord and Father? how canst thou endure to see thy self upbraided of disobedience by inferior Creatures? do not all terrestrial beings make an end of being in a compliance with the fixt Decree of their Maker? doth not the pleasant blossoming Spring yield up her Flowers to be wither'd by the succeeding Summer? and do not all the labouring Quarters of the year give up all their glories to be buried in a lowring Winter? and doth not the fair day yield up her sweet light to be blasted by a dark succeeding night? doth not the Grass wither, the Flower fade, the Tree rot, the Iron rust, the Flint wear, the Marble moulder, and all in obedience to the Laws of their Maker? God hath subjected this whole Creation to vanity; and it now becomes us all, humbly to submit to such a subjection. Let us not therefore be the only parts of the Creation, that can be found sroward to such a submission, since that we by our sins are the only causers of all this vanity upon our selves and others.

Be not, oh Child of God, so loth to die at Gods call; for thy obedience binds, and the gain of death invites thee to a willingness; though death ends this life, it begins another, though thou mayst rot in one part, that is thy body; yet thou wilt spring out and flourish in thy other part, thy soul will live a more noble life; and to shut up all, think well of this. That death which ends this life, will end thy sin and sufferings.

*Ans.* The second pretended Ground for what is  
 said is fear of Dying.

But I am young, or but arrived to my full strength: my bones are yet full of marrow, my flesh is firm. I am yet but in my spring or summer, and must my root now rot, and my Sun now set, and my coal be quenched? I am content to die (it being appointed for all men so to do,) but I would not yet: oh that my Maker would spare me a little longer!

*Ans.* Lay aside these childish pityings of thy youthful state; if it pleaseth God, thou now must die, hast thou any thing of injustice to accuse him of? what wrong hath he done thee in cutting thy life so short? Though thy great Creator once settled a terrestrial life on thy Great grand-father, and upon his children in Fee for ever; yet it was on condition he would prove obedient, but thou knowest he sin'd, and sin hath cut off the entail to his posterity, who ever since have been Tenants at will, to be put in or out at the pleasure of the Lord of Life.

Besides, if he puts thee out of the possession of this life so soon, thou canst not say, it is without warning given. Why, oh young man art thou call'd on else to remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, and bid to bear his yoke in thy youth; but in order to that judgment, which may overtake thee then.

Nor is it a judgment to give up thy life so soon; though long life may be a blessing, yet (if

thou believest) a short one is no curse; for to the pure all things are pure, to the pardoned soul all things are blessed, whether they be tribulations or death it self. Young righteous *Abel* must die by murder, whilst his wicked brother *Cain*, who slew him, shall by some hundred years out-live him. Young *Isaac*, though the promised seed, must have the knife at his throat, and be ready for a sacrifice, whilst scoffing *Ishmael* is safe at home, perhaps a sporting good *Josiah*, but a young stripling; that eminent Reformer of Gods Church must be slain when he had not lived and reigned half so long as his wicked Predecessors, that were not half so good. *John* the Baptist died by the Sword, and our Saviour on the Cross, the one about the thirtieth, the other about the three and thirtieth year of his age, both young.

When God doth appoint the day and hour of thy departure, desires of a longer stay, are not only troublesome to thy peace, but likewise vain and fruitless; thou canst not alter the decree of God; and therefore cheerfully yield thy life up to it.

Thou wouldst live, perhaps, to do God more service. But think if God wil accept of that done already, be silent and submit: if the Master saith it is enough, the servant hath no cause to complain. Thou wouldst do more for God, but God may not need that more which thou wouldst do; or else, perhaps, hath found him one that can do it better: is it not enough that he accepteth what thou hast done already? and is resolved to save thee and change thy condition for the better.

What

What if thou goest to Heaven before thy Father? and gettest to thy journies end some twenty or forty years before some others that set out with thee, or perhaps many years before thee: did ever Marriner complain that his voyage was too quick, or that he arrived to his port too soon? or did ever ambitious Courtier repine his coming to the top of honour in too few years waiting? or did ever Souldier complain that the battel lasted no longer, or that the Victory was obtained with so little fighting, and in so short a time? is it not the sooner the better in all these cases? and why should it not be so then in thine? Heaven is thy port, the top and pinnacle of thy honour and preferment, the place of thy triumph for the victory obtained over flesh, world and devils; and wilt thou yet for shame complain that thou goest thither too soon?

But what if God should grant thee a delay? and so far gratifie thy lingering soul? it cannot be long, when mans life at the utmost is but short, and so many months more thou livest, so many months more of temptations thou goest through; and when all comes to all, soul and body must part. If the Husband going a journey from the wife, will linger out the other quarter or half hour, will once more shake hands, and once more bid farewell; it may argue fondness, but little discretion; for there is little got thereby, but time is lost that in the journey might be better spent. But thy delays are far more childish, because thy journey is to Heaven, and God that stands by and bids come away, doth promise



that thy body which hath been as married to thy soul shall come soon after.

Hath God laid thee on a bed of languishing? art thou sick, heart-sick, ready to give up the Ghost? and doth God say come away? Oh reply not, it is too soon, or that thou art too young to go to Heaven, cast up thy eye of faith, and see how Heaven Gates stand open to receive thee, and let thy faith look round the room, where thou liest, and behold the Angel-messengers of thy Saviour, ready to convey thy departed Spirit thither: Oh shew no unwillingness to go, because of those standers by, lest thou grieve them and shame thy self.

3. *The third pretended Ground for the fear of Death.*

But is not death (that runs thus over all) a curse, and so irksome to be born? But why is the Lord so severe? could not he have found an easier way to pass us out of this world? did he want wisdom that he knew not how? or goodness that he would not (though he could) translate us hence, but with so much pain and trouble, which we find in dying? doth this become a God that hath proclaimed himself gracious and merciful?

*Ans.* Death (it's true) is a curse, but yet deserved; the most righteous man on earth hath sinned, and one sin merits more pains, than ever any in the first death endured: It is therefore just with God that thou sufferest so much, and



and it is of his mercy that thou sufferest no more.

But if what thou feelest of pain in dying be compared to the rest, and joy that is to follow, it is not worth a thought. He that inflicts the first death, prevents the second; he that withers the first life, implants a second; he that takes thee out of this world, taketh thee into another, which is far better; and hast thou then cause to complain, though it be by a few pains, which shall prove so much to thy advantage?

But that he makes not thy passage more easie, it is not for want of wisdom; for he is therefore wise, because he made thy frame such, that a separation of thy soul by death proves so painful; For,

That God which at first made man of soul and body, did not unite them in order to a divorce, but to an eternal cohabitation: God made not man at first to die, but to live for ever; death is the fruit of sin, and not of Gods Creation.

But had God at first so loosely bodied our souls within our bodies as they might with as much ease put them off, as our bodies do their garments, or get out of these earthly houses with as little trouble as we walk out of our doors; it is very evident the frame of man had been far worse and less commodious to the great ends of our Almighty Maker: For,

If our souls did live so loosely in our bodies, he would hardly contain his own people to stay so long in, till they had done their work for which he lodged them there. If any troubles or per-

secutions did kindle upon them, how soon could they think of flight? not out of their houses into the mountains, nor out of one Kingdom into another, but out of their bodies into another world, in swarms as great as Bees when they are driven from their Hives, or in Flocks as Birds when they are disturbed in their Nests.

And not only they, but all men else when hung with any pointed afflictions, every per, and froward fit would make men leave their bodies, that in a few months the world would be unpeopled, and this great stage would be left without an Actor, and this had likely befallen this world many ages since. And where then would God have found matter on which he might display the glorious effects of his wisdom, mercy, power, in the government of this world, as now he doth, and intends to do.

Had not death been painful, how could God have magnified his love in the gift of his Son to die for us; nor could Christ have manifest his love to his Church to be so great, had not dying been a most painful grievous suffering to be born?

And not only so, but the Lords people would have wanted likewise a means of expressing their unfeigned love unto him; and what expressions can be greater than their being willing to be whipped, stoned, slain with the Sword, sawn asunder for his sake, and his truths sake? but if they could have died all these deaths without pain, there would have been thereby no manifestation, either of love, or faith, or patience, or courage, which now are all made illustrious by  
such

such sufferings, being things so grievous and so difficult to be born, that with those excellencies of temper now named, it were impossible men should voluntarily suffer.

Nor can I see how the wicked of the Earth (were not death painful) could be over-awed, or kept in any *decorum*, by either God himself or his under Officers, the Executioners of his justice; For to what purpose should Magistrates threaten hanging, or burning to Malefactors, if there was no pain in suffering these punishments? or for what end should God himself menace the disobedient world with Famine, Sword, Pestilence, if it were as easie for a man to be starved or slain, or die of Plague Sores, as for him to put off his cloaths or to walk out of his house?

If then in all respects it is so highly convenient that death should be full of pain, it is certainly no impeachment to the wisdom of our Creator, that he made us of such a frame, the dissolution whereof must needs be so dolorous as we find it.

Nor is it any blemish to Gods mercy that he made us thus; for as I said, when he first espoused that lovely pair, of soul and body, he did not design any separation, but on condition of our sin; and for those beings that were everlastingly to be united, how could their conjunction be too close and firm? and if sin broke this union, and therein brought on us these painful pangs of death, we may thank our selves and not foolishly charge the good God of unmercifulness?

But rather since we are assured, that our God hath decreed for us (that believe) a re-union of

both in a greater firmness and glory, as he will perform at the resurrection; how much more cause have we to admire the depths of his love and mercy to us, in making amends for such momentary pains he justly inflicteth, with the gift of eternal ease and rest with him in the Heavens. Lay then thy hand upon thy mouth, mutter not a word against the dealings of the Almighty; for he is wise and good, and do thou say and think so, though he slays thee with a painful death.

4. *The fourth pretended Ground of fear.*

But what though the pains of dying may be consistent with the justice, wisdom and mercy of God to inflict, yet they may be intolerable for me to bear; at least I fear my patience will not hold out: What lie many nights and not one wink of sleep! to be sick, and heart-sick; and get no ease, no relief! is this nothing? to have a head continually raging, as if it would split in pieces, and a heart sad, lumpish, dead, and with grief ready to burst! can you blame, if I fear to die, since the entrance to it is so dreadful?

*Ans.* But all deaths are not hedg'd about with such thorns; Though the Plague or burning Fever may sometimes be attended with such piercing pains, yet not always to that extremity as our unruly fancy is apt to suggest: for if the distemper be violent, it seizeth on the vitals, stupifies the nerves and renders the Patient incapable of sense; come to such, and ask them how they do, they will tell you very well, though the distemper be mortal.

But

But though many pass these strait and pinching Gates of Death, yet Consumptions and other more mild diseases let out more; and thou canst not infallibly presage what death it is which thou must die.

Yet let thy sickness be what it may, & the pains as great as thou canst well imagine, they are no more nor so much as thou hast deserved, and what multitudes of Infants have undergone, and with less trouble than what thou already feelest from thy slavish fears of dying, before death it self comes near thee.

But again, let thy pains be what they may, they cannot ordinarily exceed the throws of travailing women; and yet how desirous (dost thou see) they are of Children, how comfortably do they go out their time, and how patiently do they often bear their pains, in hopes they shall escape with life, and have a Child to boot!

Consider these things, O my soul, and apply them closely to thy self! O was but Heaven as desirable to thee as a Child is to a Mother in Travail! I know what would become of all thy fears of a painful sickness, or of the pangs of death; wouldst thou not then believingly think how soon will all these pains be forgotten, when the man-child of all these promises (which is eternal life) shall by these throws of death, be born, and laid in my bosom.

What shall thy courage be beneath a womans? and shall Heaven want that esteem, yea the enjoyment of thy God and Saviour, that a Child hath ordinarily with the Daughters of men? and think again shall young Infants out-do thee in that

that last and fatal Battel, where thou shouldest most carefully endeavour to acquit thy self like a man? how patiently will those pretty Babes endure their pains, and bite in their gripes? and sometimes in giving up the Ghost, interchange their smiles for groans, and groans again for smiles, and so with a sorrowful kind of joyfulness, finish their quick-run'd race? and art thou not ashamed to be daunted with that which every Infant can so well endure?

*Obj.* But the dying Infant doth not foresee the judgment following which should make him fear as I do.

*Ans.* Nor doth he foresee thy Masters joy that should make him rejoice? what shall a stupid ignorance, such as the Child is, be a more powerful weapon to conquer death, than the most divine knowledge and belief of Heaven and Eternal Life, which thou hast title to?

Yet farther, the Holy Spirit in Scripture doth frequently send men to inferiour creatures, that from them (in some respects) they may learn to live; and why may not I then send thy timorous soul to them, that of them thou mayst learn to die? I doubt not but the Oxe and Sheep find pain in dying as well as we do; but when do we see them rave and impatient? what hear you from them but now and then a groan, at length a gasp or two, and a stretch of their legs, and away they go. It's true, the Swine will cry and roar, and strive when the Knife comes near her Throat; but doth it become the Lambs of Christs Fold to imitate such unruly beasts as Swine are? remember Nature hath made thee a Man, and

Grace



Grace a Child of God, and it becomes not such a creature as thou art to be out-done in any shew of vertue by creatures that are so far below thee.

But (say you) what would you have me do, when my sickness and sorrows are upon me, and press me sore; I Answer thee; First, Bite in thy present pain and make ready for the next, with hopes that by and by thy gracious Father may make it easier, when one hour, one night is past, prepare for thy next; if thy pains continue violent, be sure they will not last long, they will either end thee, or thou wilt receive a mitigation.

Consider again, thy Saviour, and let him hang before thine eyes, nailed, pierced, and bleeding on the Cross. Think with thy self that he suffered more, yet deserved nothing thereof; all he suffered was for thee, and yet though he did suffer for thee, it was not that thou shouldst escape the first death, but that he might prevent thy second death: it is enough, that as to the first death, he hath taken away the sting thereof, which is sin, and so made it tolerable. What a mercy is it, that thou art able to say; well, though my body smarts, yet I thank my Saviour, my Soul is at ease, I feel no guilt, I see all my sins pardoned, and my soul accepted: Think, I say, of Jesus Christ, and all his sufferings; what are thy fainting sweats to his sweats of blood? what are the aking of thy bones and joints, to the piercing of his hands and feet; as by them he became thy Saviour, so let him therein be thy example of patience to imitate?

Lastly, Let that time which others spend in fruitless and impatient complaints, be spent by thee in serious prayer to God, to give thee patience, and with the renewal of thy pains, to renew thy strength; who giveth to us that ask, all things liberally, that he knows we need. This carriage will bring more glory to God, will more become thy profession, be more comfortable to thy friends, more silencing to the ungodly, and more peaceful to thine own soul.

5. *The fifth pretended Ground of fear.*

But could I away with the pains of dying, yet methinks there is somewhat in death it self that doth amaze me; It is not for nothing call'd the King of Terrours. How can I think of the faulting of my speech, the stoppage of my breath, the losing of the use of all my senses, without some agony? for so lively a quick sens'd body to grow in a moment senseless, a meer stock, a clod, fit for nothing but to be ram'd down in a short and narrow Grave, there to lie and rot it self to dirt! how can I think of this without trouble and perplexity?

*Ans.* Whatever becomes of thy body, being once dead, it makes no matter, let it be burnt to ashes, or rot in the field; *Cælo legitur qui non habet urnam*, Let the Birds of the Air, or the Beasts of the Field devour it, let its Members moulder away above ground or below, it will be of no more concern to thee, than if it had been with the greatest cost embalmed, and the greatest pomp

pomp intomb'd, thou shalt neither know nor feel, nor with any other sense, perceive the difference of the one from the other: what is it to the carcass of the Oxe, or Lamb, or Fowl, or Fish, whether it be roasted, boiled or baked, or whether it be thrown out as carrion to the Field, and yet whilst living, they may have as much sense of pain and ease as thou hast. It was wisely said of the dying Philosopher, when his Friends asked him, where he would have them bury him, He replied, *they might (if they pleas'd) lay him in the Fields*; they told him, the Birds and Beasts would then eat him; *Put a Stick then* (saith he) *in my hand, that I may beat them away*; but say they, you will not feel them, *Aduck good then* (saith he) *may my flesh do them, if they filling themselves do me no harm.*

Death, it's true, is call'd the King of Terrors; and it is so indeed to the wicked only, because of the judgment and condemnation to endless misery that follows; but I presume thou art a godly man with whom I am now dealing; and to thee I say, it is no such terrible thing as thy flesh suggesteth, and thy unruly fancy conceiveth.

For what is death it self, but the separation of thy soul from thy body, as from a house which is grown untenantable; it is but the parting of two old friends, with an assurance of a joyful meeting again at the resurrection; and what if the body lies in the grave till then, it will not there be miserable, for it feels no pain: the Soul shall in the mean time, amongst the Spirits of just men be made perfect, shall enjoy more per-

fest ease and pleasure than ever it did before: What if thy body be shipwrack'd in the waves of death, thy soul which is the passenger should certainly escape with its life? and what if in this wreck the lumber of this world be lost, thou shalt certainly be furnished with all things of far greater worth both for necessity and delight when thou gettest on shore in the other world? what is there in all this that should so affright thee?

Death as to its tragick pomp and preparation (saith Dr. Moore, most elegantly) may Lib. pag. 490. Souls Immorta-  
may lay waste the operations of the mind, putting her into a fit of dotage and fury, making the visage look ghastly and distracted; and at the best sadly pale and consumed, as if life and soul were quite to be extinguished. But such a spectacle is no more but like a shew which is commonly acted on a Stage, where some person lies as wallowing in his blood; and after some horrid groans and gasps, lies stretched out as stark dead upon the Stage: but being once drawn off, he finds himself alive and very well, making himself merry with his friends in the attiring room after his fictitious pangs of death.

And if death is no more than this; an evil in shew and appearance, rather than in reality; if thy soul when got out, though with groans, will strait be refreshing her self with her God, and a whole Host of Angels and Saints in Heaven, all thy friends; what is there in all this that should amaze thee? thou wilt be as merry in Heaven as thy heart can hold, when thy friends are sadly making preparations for the Funeral of thy body.

But

But yet again (to take thee once more to task) why shouldst thou be such an enemy to death; when thou art so familiar a friend to sleep which is deaths Sister? After many restless hours spent upon thy bed in pursuit of sleep, when composing slumbers steals upon thy eye lids, how pleasingly grateful are they to thee? and what my soul, is all this life but a few restless hours spent in pursuit of rest, and why should it then grieve, much less affright thee to feel the slumber of death seize upon thee? when it will but sweetly compose thy restless head and heart, and in a moment give thee what thou hast so long desired: Death will create thee far more quiet, than ever thy night sleeps were able to effect: For,

First, Thy night sleeps are often incumbered with troublesome, and sometimes affrightful dreams; but the sleep of death is free from such annoyance; it's a perfect rest, a rest without the least disturbance.

Secondly, Though in thy night sleeps thou dost forget thy dangers and thy cares, and mayst grow senseless of thy pains and sickness if thou art ill; yet after a few minutes, how dost thou with all thy cares and perils, sickness and pains awake again together; but in the sleep of death, thou shalt not only lose the sense of all such evils, but shalt also when thou dost awake, never to thy grief remember or grow sensible of them any more; for thou wilt not waken into any such miserable world as this, but in a sweet and peaceable Kingdom of thy Saviour: Oh how sweet a thing will it be to fall asleep, a poor blind naked miserable creature, and to awake a Prince, rich,

Noble, encreased in all things, and wanting nothing, and so thou wilt do at death.

Thirdly, Thy nights sleep ties up all thy senses, casts bonds and fetters upon all the noble operations of thy mind; but the sleep of death, though it binds up all the senses of thy body, and that more titely than the sleep of nature doth, yet it sets thy soul at perfect liberty, and makes her absolute mistress of all her faculties, she will never be so her self, or find her self so free, as when death her Jaylor hath knockt off all her chains, and let her out of this fleshly prison.

Fourthly, Thy natural sleep is but a sluggish lingering way or means of recovering the strength and vigour lost in the labours of the preceding day; but the sleep of death is quick and sudden, not six or seven hours; there is scarce a minute betwixt thy last gasp, and thy souls awakening fresh and vigorous, full of life and spirit, in another world.

Fifthly, and lastly, Though after a sweet sleep taken here on earth, I may awaken under the Canopy of many Blessings, I may find my self and all my Family in health, my house safe, and all my substance secure; and after a dark night, my room delighted with the beams of a bright morning.

But alas! what is all this to the souls awakening in Heaven, as it shall so soon as the stund of death is over! what is all this to her awakening in the bosom of her dear Saviour, and in the embracements of ten thousand Saints and Angels all striving to make much of their new arrived guest, must not this be far more sweet!

Think



Think of these things together, and then tell me, how canst thou hereafter think of sleeping with any pleasure, and not at the same time rejoice at thy approaching sleep of death, which in many respects doth so far exceed the other.

Oh when death draws neer, do not startle, cry not out as one undone, as if when thou diest thou must needs totally perish, but rather, then lift up thy head, and triumphantly proclaim to the standers by, Now doth the day, the hour, the moment of my Redemption draw nigh!

Now art thou drawing neer thy home, Heaven is within sight, and its melody almost within hearing, thy Lord hath the curtain in his hand ready to draw it, to shew thee all that glory that hitherto he hath been but telling thee of, and give thee a possession of all that which hitherto thou hast enjoyed only in hopes and title. What dost thou fear and shrug, and tremble at my soul, thou peevish froward Creature! Shall thy Father tell thee thou must go sleep, and lay his commands upon thee to lie down in peace? Shall thy dear Lord and Saviour stand by perswading thee so to do, and by the sweet and glorious promises of eternal life, and living with him in the Heavens, allure thee quietly to obey thy Father, and himself to go to rest? Shall he sing thee a lullaby of his own falling asleep, at his entering Paradise that day he died with the soul of his converted Prodigal, & of his rising again in body the third day, being a certain pledge of the resurrection of thine hereafter, & all the while gently rock thee in his tender arms? Shall his Angels

stand waiting to convey thy departed soul home with songs of triumph? and shall nothing of all this abate thy fears, silence thy complaints, and bring thee to a cheerful submission? art thou still amazed and so affrighted as if so gracious a Father, and so tender-hearted a Redeemer, were but commanding thee to thy hurt, and treacherously alluring thee to thy undoing, as if they were about to butcher thee, and make thy bed and chamber the Shambles. Oh wretched unthankful soul, either mend this behaviour, or I will doubt whether thou ever hadst any saving knowledge of God or Jesus Christ; for how canst thou be said either to know or love them, when thou darest not trust them? Fear not then my Soul, but boldly throw thy self into his arms, who will certainly keep that safe which thou committest to him.

6. *The sixth pretended Ground of fear.*

I dare not die, for I have many friends, which I am loth to leave behind me; I have many near relations, which, when I am gone, God knows what will become of them, was my head once laid, they will want a tender Father or Mother, or Tutor, or Governour: whilst I am with them, I see their wants, and can relieve them; when they do ill, I am present to counsel and reprove them; I can pray with them, and for them, and instruct them in the fear of the Lord. But when I am gone, the Lord knows whether any will do so much for them; which, if they want, how likely is it but that they will be ruined.

*Ans.* Truly, this Objection hath somewhat in it, and for the substance of it, is that which did drive the Apostle into such straits, that he knew not whether it were best to live or die ; it would certainly have been best for him to die ; but it did not seem to be best for the Churches, and therefore he knew not what to say.

But to answer thee : In the first place, I cannot blame thee for thy tenderness to the eternal lives of thy relations : If *Paul* was so willing to be anathematiz'd for his Country men, how much more justifiable is it for thee to desire to stay awhile from the possession of thy celestial blessings for the souls sake of thy Husband, or Wife, or Children, or Brethren.

But then be sure thou art in good earnest, that it is for this and for nothing else but this, that thou desirest to stay : if it be indeed for this, let me then advise thee ; perhaps Reader, thou art now in health, and this is the time that God doth lend thee to them : Take all the care thou canst now of them ; daily admonish, reprove, correct, instruct, double and redouble thy diligence in these respects ; multiply thy prayers and tears, and sighs and groans to God for them. Give not God rest until he hath proclaimed himself the God of thine as well as of thy self ; be sure thy Lord finds thee so doing when he calls thee away ; and if he doth, speak not a word then more of this matter ; when thou hast done what thou canst, and God will let thee do no more, quietly resign thy soul to him, and leave him to do the rest, whilst thou art with them they are thine, and God will require their souls at thy hands ;

but

but when God calls thee hence, he gives thee a discharge of thy charge, they are then no longer thine but Gods; God takes them off from thee to himself, and canst thou harbour such a conceit as this, that God will not be as faithful to them as thou canst be.

When thou diest all thy fleshly relation to them is cut off, they are no more thy husband, or wife, or children, or brethren, thy spiritual relation to them continues, but thy fleshly expires with thy self, thou hast then no more to do with them than with those thou never sawest in all thy life; they are none of thy concerns, leave them to the care and kindness of thy God, who is the universal Father of all his Creatures, and be sure he had never made them, if he knew not what to do with them: it is certain he will get glory by them, and in that do thou rest thy self.

Suppose thou wast now dying, couldst thou commit thy soul into the hands of thy Redeemer with confidence of his care thereof, and thy body also to him with an assurance of a resurrection? canst thou trust him for such great things as these? and canst thou not trust him with thy friends? are they indeed more precious to thee than thy soul? Perhaps thou wert fatherless and motherless thy self when thou wast very young; and what rare experiences hast thou had of the care of Heaven to thee, both as to thy soul and body? how many faithful friends hath God raised thee up, to give thee good counsel & wholesome admonitions? or if he hath not? what if he himself hath performed this office of a careful tender

Friend

Friend and Father? no teachings like the teachings of God? and hath he not promised we shall be all taught of God from the highest to the lowest? He it was that led thee forth to hear his Word, and by it convinced, converted, and healed thee; he back'd his Word by his Spirit and Conscience, and many providences, and never left thee till he won thee to himself. And not only so; but hath he not as graciously provided for thy outward man? help'd thee to a good Master, carried thee through the time of thy Apprentiship, and at length set thee up, and blest thee with a great increase, or at least to thy content; and all this after thy Parents were taken from thee. Now if this be thy case, as it hath been of many Fatherless and Motherless Children; what reason hast thou to fear but the Lord may be as gracious to thine, as he was to thee?

How many and what great and precious promises hath God made to the poor and needy, the helpless and friendless of the earth? how particularly hath he promised to be a Father to the Fatherless, and a Husband to the Widow? how severely hath he thunder'd out curses against those that dare to wrong them? and how strictly hath he charged his people to be tender and pitiful to them, making his Command herein to be a very weighty point in the Christian Religion? *This is pure Religion (saith James) to visit the Fatherless and the widow; and to keep ones self unspotted with the world.* And are not all these arguments of his special care of them, and kindness to them? Never more for shame say, that thou hast no Friend to leave them to, since so great an one as God

God hath freely offered to take the charge of them to himself.

O but sayst thou, I have seen many Families wasted, and their Children ruin'd, when their Parents heads are laid ! Well be it so ; And hast thou not seen many do very well, and some better than those that have had their Parents living ! Are there not many can say with *David*, *When my Father and Mother left me, the Lord took me up.*

But yet farther : Hast thou not likewise seen many Families ruin'd, and Children undone under their Parents eyes ; yea, and godly Parents too ? How many godly men have lived to see their Children grown up to Men and Women, but both wicked and miserable ? all their counsels and corrections, and estates have been spent and lost upon them, which have brought their Parents gray hairs with sorrow to the Grave. What Sons of *Belial* were the Sons of good old *Heli* ? and how little better were the Sons of *Samuel* ? Had not *Abraham* his scoffing *Ishmael*, and *Isaac* his prophane Son *Esau* ; and *Jacob* his incestuous *Reuben*, and his bloody *Simeon* and *Levi* ; and *David* his incestuous Son *Amnon* and his bloody *Absalom* ? And though *Christ* was no Father, yet he was a good Master to his twelve Apostles ; and did not *Judas* prove a Devil under his instructions and good example. What sayst thou to all this ? True, if thou livest thou mayst be a means of grace to thy relations ; but all means are not effectual, God can work by thee, but he can also work without thee ; thou mayst exhort them to fear the Lord ; but God only can plant



plant his fear in them; and this he can do when thou art dead: it would be thy sin to neglect them while thou stayest; but it is proud presumption to despair of their being happy (when God calls thee hence) when thou hast no reason for it, but this, that they will want thy presence; as if God could not bless and make them happy without thee.

Pardon me Reader, that I have stayed so long on this Subject, for I know it is a tender Point, a ground of trouble that wants, yea, and that deserveth satisfaction: and if all I have said therein doth not quiet thee and make thee willing to go hence, I shall say no more but this; I pray God open thy eyes, and give thee to see a greater sweetness in Jesus Christ than all thy Relations what ever; which when done, I am confident when God says, *Come*, thou wilt never cry more, *Stay*.

### 7. The seventh pretended Ground of fear.

But what if I was willing to bid adieu to my Fathers House, and leave this world, and all its enjoyments behind me, as being sufficiently tired with the frustrations of a pursued happiness therein? yet methinks, the change I shall pass at death, will be so very great and amazing, I fear I shall not bear it. To go hence from them I know, to a place and company I never knew or saw in all my life, to leave my Friends, Relations, Neighbours, with whom I have a long time lived, and with whom I have familiarly conversed, to go into a Country where I may not meet  
with

with one face I know; how strangely shall we look on one another? what little content do I take in any company on earth where I meet with shiness? will it not be so in Heaven?

*Ans.* Art thou truly godly? and dost thou say thou knowest none in Heaven? that is strange. Who is he whom you call Father, every time you pray? what are you born of God? united to God by faith and love? and held communion with him, and yet not know him? hast thou had so long a humble and contrite Spirit? and hath the high and lofty one, who (*Isa. 57. 15.*) inhabiteth Eternity dwelt within thee, to revive and comfort thee, according to his promise, and yet dost thou not know him? And what dost thou make of Jesus Christ, thy Head and Lord, and Husband, who hath loved thee, and died for thee, and washed thee in his blood, that ascended into Heaven, and is set down at the right Hand of the Majesty on High? is he a stranger also to thee? is not he that beloved One, whom thou hast leaned upon travelling through this wilderness? *Cant. 8. 5.* Hast thou leaned all the days of thy new life to his wisdom? rested in his righteousness, travelled in his strength, been accepted in his blood, and yet dost thou not know him? Hast thou, through his grace, been a doer of his will? and hath he, according to his promise, come into thee, made his abode with thee, and manifested himself so frequently to thee, and yet dost thou not know him? How strange a thing is this?

Well (sayst thou) but if I know him, it is but  
 very

very little, I never saw him in all my life? And what if thou hast not seen him with thy bodily eyes? yet hast thou not believed in him whom thou hast not seen, and rejoyced with joy unspeakable, and full of glory? though thou hast not known him after the flesh, yet thou hast after the Spirit.

But comfort thy self, though thou hast known him but little, and that through a vail darkly, yet he knoweth thee most perfectly: He knows thee by name, and separated thee to himself from the womb, and effectually called and justified thee; he knows thee by thy name, and knows thy dwelling, and visiteth thee every morning, and is with thee living, and will not leave thee dying; and when he hath taken thee to himself in the Heavens, thou shalt know him as he knows thee; that is intimately, perfectly: I know we are very loth to go to a strangers house with whom we have little or no acquaintance; but yet if it be told us that we are well known to that family much beloved, and highly respected, we are then satisfied; & should we not be as well satisfied notwithstanding all our partial unacquaintedness with the Lord of the family of Heaven; yet when invited, willingly to go, being credibly informed that that great Lord knows us very well, and loves us very highly, and is heartily desirous to see us there.

But sayst thou, if I know in some measure God and his Son, the Lord of that City, I know no more. There are ten thousands of Angels there, and I know not one of them, and as many spirits of just men, some little acquaintance

I had with some of the later on earth, but since arriv'd thither, they are so transfigured, so wonderfully changed, I shall not know one of them when I see them.

What if thou knowest not one Angel in all the Heavens? is it not enough that many of them may know thee? But how do I know that? How? thou hast been their special charge ever since thou wast born to Jesus Christ. Are they not all ministering Spirits to them that are Heirs of glory. (*Heb.*) Thy new birth gave thee this Heirship. So soon as any soul is converted, Jesus Christ doth, as it were, say to his Angels, take care, especial care of that creature. How very well did the Angels know *Abraham* and the place of his habitation? whom again and again they visited, and how familiarly did they suffer themselves to be entertain'd both of him and righteous *Lot*? How affectionately did an Angel salute *Daniel* by name? O *Daniel* greatly beloved! How joyfully did an Angel salute *Mary* the Mother of our Lord? and how familiarly did he converse in dreams with *Joseph* the reputed Father of our Lord? How kindly did an Angel comfort *Mary Magdalene* and the other *Mary*, when they early came to visit the holy Sepulchre of our Lord? how well did he know their persons and their business, when he said, *Mat. 28. 5. Fear not, I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified; he is not here; for he is risen, as he said: Come see the place where the Lord lay, and go quickly, and tell his Disciples that he is risen from the dead, and behold he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him, as I have told you.* What discourse could be more kind

Kind, friendly, and familiar than this? O fear it not thou doubting Soul, if thou art a Child of God, thou art as well known to the Angels as *Abraham*, and *Lot*, and *Daniel*, and *Mary* were; and thou shalt find so much when thou comest among them. Methinks it should inravisht thee to think; how these noble creatures will flock about thee, and bid thee welcome, as one greatly beloved of the Lord; and say unto thee, not as to the *Mary's*, *Come, see the Tomb where thy Lord lay*, but come see the Throne where thy Lord sits in all his glory.

But that thou shouldst think thy self an utter stranger to all the Spirits of the just, is more strange, when there may be some of thy neer relations there, and many of those that thou hast had for many years such sweet Fellowship in the Ordinances of the Gospel? why shouldst thou think that Heaven should impair any knowledge? it will encrease all thy excellencies, but diminish none of them: If I shall sit down with *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* in the Kingdom; surely, I shall know them to be such: And why may I not know others as well as they? But what if I should know neither Angel nor Saint there? it is enough that I know the Lord of that place, and they are all his servants, and if he will own me, I know that they will acknowledge me; if God calls me Son, I know they will own me as a Brother.

Besides their natures are all perfectly gracious and holy, and I shall be like them; and we shall all know each other to be so; and what business can there possibly be among such, who



are satisfied in each others sincere love and affection ? There may be strangeness amongst men, because there is so much selfishness, so much feigned and dissembled love and friendship, but in Heaven there is no such thing, there is nothing there but simplicity, uprightness, open-heartedness, love without guile, friendship without hypocrisy. Thou mayst be acquainted with a thousand Saints and Angels in an hours time as if thou hadst known them a thousand years.

You may find something of this amongst the Saints on earth when they come together, though they never saw each other before ; yet when in discourse they find not one anothers Spirit, and perceive a mutual relishing of the things of God, they grow of a sudden as well acquainted as if they had known each other many years. And if this be so, be not, poor soul, amazed at this great change of company at death ; For it is but as dying Doctor Preston said, *I shall change my Place, but not my Company.*

### 3. *The eight pretended Ground of fear.*

But what if after all this, there should be no such place as Heaven ? what if that Paradise be no where but in mens fancies, and its pleasures nothing but the dreams of their idle and sleepy imaginations ? what if all that is to be seen and enjoyed, is here on earth, and when I lose these, I shall never find any other ?

*Answ.* What ! Heaven a dream, a fancy, a mere



meer imagination ! it is impossible. God, Christ, Spirit, Myriads of Saints and Angels know it's real, they are in it, enjoy it, and shall eternally there make their abode ! What no Heaven ! then there is no Hell, but the Devils themselves will contradict that ; for to their cost they both know and feel it.

No Heaven ! why shouldst thou doubt it, when no Nation of what Tongue, or Kindred, or Religion so ever, ever questioned it, so evident hath it been to the light of nature. All the Jews in their several Generations believed it, and those that were truly godly among them, above all things sought it.

The poor Heathens believed there was an *Elysium* place of pleasure for the souls of just men after this life : The Turks believe there is a Paradise, where the souls of the righteous are rewarded.

And shalt thou who art a Christian, who hast more abundant ground for thy confidence thereof make any scruple about it, search the Scriptures, for they do testify thereof.

It is as certain that there is a Heaven, as that God is true, that in his word hath many a time affirmed it.

It is as true, as that Jesus Christ is a true Prophet sent of God, for he hath taught it.

It is as sure, as that the God-man Jesus, did die and rose, and is ascended thither ; and who questions that which was confirmed by many of the Disciples ; for where is he now but in that Kingdom ?

It is as true ; that the Apostles had and writ  
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by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; for they in their writings have confirmed it.

It is as certainly true that all that are dead in the Lord are not perished.

It is as true, as that God will put a difference betwixt a man and a beast; and a good man and a bad after this life, and that is as certain as that he is the righteous Governour of the world.

It is as certain, as that all the generations of the Children of men from the beginning of the world to this day, cannot be mistaken in a point wherein they have so universally agreed.

Lastly, it is as sure as that the dictates of the consciences of all men, both good and bad, have any truth in them; for the consciences of all men either hope or fear it.

And if so, what dost thou scruple? why dost thou not doubt thy senses as well as thy reason, when it hath so good foundation to build its assent and perswasion on, as it hath in this particular? Why dost thou not doubt whether there be an earth whilst thou walkest upon it, or a Sun when thou seest it shine, or Fire when thou feeldest it burn? why may not the truth of these things (which thy senses are so confident of) be disputed, as well as this of Heaven, where thy reason hath so many clear and evident reasons to believe it as I have given; is not my reason a faculty of Gods planting in me as well as my senses? and I am sure the God of truth never gave me any faculty to deceive men when I exercise it about its proper objects and by due *mediums*, as I do here.

Light is the *medium* by which I behold the ob-

jects of sense, and clear arguments are the *medi-  
ums* by which I behold the objects of reason,  
if my arguments be clear, my conclusion proved  
by them must needs be certain, and there is no  
more cause why I should then doubt thereof, than  
of the objects of sense when I behold them at a  
due distance in a clear light; If the arguments I  
have heaped together be not clear, then doubt it;  
but if they are, then I challenge thy assent, as I  
do, that thou shouldest believe that to be, which  
thou hearest or seest or feelest, to be: What  
man, doubt the truth of thy Kingdom, thy Test,  
thy reward? tell me, who is it that questions  
whether there is a Heaven besides thy self? yea,  
some have. But who? what are they? are they com-  
petent Judges in the case? Perhaps it is some blind  
Atheist, some dirty flesh pleasing Epicure, whose  
God is his belly, who mindeth earthly things.  
Poor blinded wretches! the dust of this world  
hath put out their eyes, their fleshly lusts have  
choaked their reason, and laid waste all princi-  
ples of religion in them; the God of this world  
hath blinded them, and the righteous God hath  
given them up to a reprobate sense; and are  
men of such a character fit to umpire a matter of  
so great weight as this is? Alas, poor men! it  
is their interest to deny there is an Heaven, be-  
cause they despair of ever coming there, like  
prodigal Heirs, they first spend their Estate, and  
then turn sullen Stoicks, and learn to contemn  
riches; a meer device to allay the anguish of  
their minds, which would arise upon the re-  
flection on their folly. These men first lose  
Heaven by their debaucheries, then contemn it;

and to ease themselves of all regret of mind for so doing, at length deny there is any such thing.

But tell me, did ever any truly gracious soul make real doubt thereof? which of all the Patriarchs, or Prophets, or Apostles, or the Son of God himself? they all affirm'd it, believed it, sought it; and because they knew nothing but sin could shut that Paradise against them, they chose rather the spoiling their goods than to sin, to leave the Pleasures of the City and Honours of the Court than sin; they were many of them and their followers, that were cruelly mocked, scourged, crucified, sawn asunder, not accepting a deliverance on the hard condition of sinning against God; and why, because they believed, and expected a better resurrection, another life, a better life? and where, but in the Heavens, that new Jerusalem, the City of the living God?

In a word, God hath said it, and all these have spoke it, and believed it from him; and let God be true, and every man esteemed a lyar that contradicts him.

If then it is certain there is a Heaven, and Heaven be such a place of joy and perfect happiness as I have shewn; be confident (when God calls) to let go this world, launch forth and never doubt but thou shalt arrive in a better world than ever thou hast found this all the days of thy pilgrimage in it.

9. *The ninth pretended ground of fear.*

But if it be so certain that there is such a Kingdom as Heaven is, it may be, God knows how long, before I enter into it; for what if (as some hold, and my slavish flesh doth sometimes fear) my soul at death shall fall asleep, and never waken more till rowled by the sound of the last Trump: It is better taking the bitter-sweet on earth, than to leave all here, and be turned into the condition of a senseless stock or stone. Tell me, is it likely when I die, that my soul will fall asleep, or it will immediately enter into a state of joy?

*Ans.* I shall say the less to this, because I have fully (as I conceive) spoken to it in my *Treatise of the Souls immortality*; to which I refer thee for further satisfaction.

Notwithstanding I shall give this short reply.

When thou fearest thy soul may sleep at death, examine well the reason of this thy fear. Did God (who knoweth best) ever tell thee, it would then sleep? I have proved the contrary, by twenty Testimonies from Scripture, which is the revelation of Gods mind concerning this matter. It is true, Scripture calleth death a sleep, and so it may be, and yet the soul awake: is it not enough that death lays the body to rest, and may it not be called sleep from thence? In our natural sleep our bodily senses are bound up, but yet our souls are alive, and sometimes more active than awake, as the Spouse saith in the *Canticles*,

*I sleep, but my heart waketh*; her soul was busie and active in her sleeping body, and why may it not as well be so at death out of the body? though death deprives the body of eyes and ears, and other senses, yet it must not deprive the soul of life and thoughts any more than the natural sleep doth?

Dost thou not know that when thy body returns to dust, thy soul shall return to God that gave it? hath not Christ told thee, that the soul cannot be killed, and if it cannot be slain by the sword; how should it die by a disease? shall the soul of the penitent Thief enter that day he died into Paradise? and canst thou yet dream of thy souls sleeping in the Grave? is the Grave a Paradise?

But how canst thou imagine that a being so full of life and action as thy soul is, should sleep? what doth it sleep in the dead and buried carcass or out of it, in it (sayst thou) without doubt, ~~it~~ sleeps at all? But I pray doth it sleep in but a part of the carcass or in the whole? as it lives in the whole (sayst thou) when the body liveth, so it sleeps in the whole when the body is dead: But then tell me when the body is rotted and turned into dust, this dust dig'd up and scatter'd here and there, and mixt with the dust of twenty other carcasses, where is thy sleeping soul then? what is thy soul broken into as many pieces as the dust of thy moulder'd body? how many thousand scraps of a soul will there be? or will thy whole soul sleep in every particle of the separated dust of thy body? will not this multiply thy one single soul, into ten thousand souls? if thou



thou canst perswade thy self, as the Papists do of the body of our Lord, that it is wholly in Heaven, and wholly in every sacred Wafer, and in every Cup of Sacramental Wine at one and the self-same time, thou mayst perhaps digest such a vain conceit as this of thy soules sleeping in every part of thy divided body, but else thou must be forced to reject this as most absurd as well as that.

Again, Let me hear what thou canst plead for this vain fear of thy soules sleeping or dying with thy body.

Oh sayst thou, if my soul was immortal, why doth not she know so much of her self? why is she so often afraid that she shall be extinct with her body, if she did not fear it. I should not fear it.

Let me tell thee, if thou wilt admit of fears and jealousies as arguments, for the being or not being of things thou wilt never have done. How many hundred things hast thou feared that never came to pass? and why may not this be one? what if *Peter* walking upon the tempestuous Sea feared to be drowned? and what if the *Israelites* at the red Sea feared either to be devoured by their enemies Swords or by the Waters? yet, by the power of Jesus, the one got safe into the Ship, and the other to Shore: and why may not thy soul that fears to be swallowed up of the grave with its body, be as safely conveyed to Heaven, when the same power can effect the one as the other?

But what if thy soul fears her mortality? doth she not more often hope her immortality? Set then

then thy hopes against thy fears; for hope is as good a ground to conclude she is immortal, as fear is that she is but mortal.

Yet I must say that neither hope nor fear in themselves, without farther reason, is sufficient ground to conclude the one or the other: But I have given thee abundant reason from the Revelations of God, and from the nature of the soul her self: To conclude, she is immortal, and doubtless, grounded hopes should prevail with thee more than groundless fears.

But where is it that thou fearest it? perhaps in some fit of melancholy: and what heed then is to be taken to thy fears? when there are no things so absurd but melancholy is able to persuade us.

Yet what if thou shouldst fear it all thy days? there are hundreds and thousands of other souls never feared it at all, Christ nor the Thief after he had received the promise, nor *Paul*, nor many Troops of Heroick souls, that have quitted their bodies in flames for the testimonies of Jesus, never scrupled it at all, and hast thou not more reason to conclude with them upon their confidence, that souls are immortal, than to deny it upon thy own unreasonable scruples.

But my scruples (sayst thou) are not so unreasonable as you imagine, is it not shrewdly to be suspected, that when by experience we find, that the faculties of mens souls do gradually ripen and decay with their bodies as in youth and age; why may they not likewise utterly perish with their bodies? how stupid are the faculties of our souls when Infants, how crazy when aged? and why

why may they not utterly cease to act when the body dies?

I answer, This Objection indeed doth prove, that the soul whilst in the body, doth depend in its operations on the body, and who denies that? for when the Spirits the Instruments of the souls motions be torpid as in children and old men, what wonder if she be more sluggish than when they are more brisk and fiery as in a more perfect age? Can the Trumpeter send forth as shrill a sound from a Trumpet made of Pasteboard or Wood, as one made of solid tinicent Brass or Silver? Can the Musician play as sweetly on an Instrument, whose strings are moist and half wound up as where the strings are dry and firm, and wound up to their due height. What Carpenter can hew his Timber with an Instrument of soft as of hardened Iron or Steel? And yet you would think one to argue very foolishly from thence, that therefore the Musician and the Carpenter cannot live or act without them: It is true, if the Instrument be broke, it will follow, the Musician can play no more upon it, and if the Axe be blunt, he cannot work well with it; or if it be broke he cannot work at all with it.

But it follows not, that they can neither live nor work in some other way: The soul when it lives in the body, acts with it as the Musician doth with his Lute or Vial; but when the Lute is broke, and the body dead, the soul as the Musician can sing many a melodious tune by her self.

Again, though the soul whilst in the body,  
doth

doth in its operations depend on the body; yet it doth not so depend, as if its faculties must exactly wait the leisure of the body in their ripening. How wonderful would a soul improve in a childish body with good education? how often is it seen, that a child often is more wise and knowing in matters of the highest concern, than some men at threescore. If the soul had not a power to improve her self, but was necessarily restrained in the increase of her faculties to the growth of the body, then would wit go by years, and the oldest man (before man-hood begins to decline) would be the wisest; but this is contrary to experience? for we find that souls are more or less wise, according to the more or less industry they use to attain to wisdom.

But in the next place, I have proved in my *Treatise of the Souls Immortality*, that the nature of the faculties of mans soul is such, that it is impossible to conceive how they should rise from a being that is mortal; and that the very being of understanding, memory, a power of spontaneous motion as argument sufficient that the subject wherein they reside must be immortal, and so immortal; notwithstanding the body may be employed in a subserviency to these during the habode of the soul in the body: And if so, what is here objected must vanish into Air and Smoke.

What now remains, but that since (if thy soul is purified through believing in the Son of God,) and as I have proved it is immortal, and shall immediately enter into a state of joy upon the death of thy body; but that when ever the Lord calls

thee hence, thou shouldst joyfully acquit this body, with a certain and sure hope of entering a better state than ever thou didst experience in all thy life.

10. *The tenth pretended Ground of fear.*

Notwithstanding all these stops put to the torrent of my fears, yet they can find a vent; for like great swelling waters when their force is stopt in one place, it breaks out in another. What if the Kingdom of Heaven be so great and real? what if it be so certain that the Spirits of the just at death enter into it? and what if in some weak measure believe all this? yet my fears and jealousies are so frequent that it may all be otherwise, that I scarcely know whether I may say I believe them or not: Are not these fears arguments of such a staggering faith that may so far provoke the Holy faithful God, as to cause him to swear in his wrath, *that I shall never enter into that rest of his?*

*Ans.* To deal plainly with thee, I would not out of pretence to ease thee of thy burthen palliate thy sin; nor yet be so severe as to condemn thee for thy defects farther than a Commission from Scripture will bear me out. Unbelief of any known promise of God is a damning sin, and if (after all that God hath said of an eternal Life, he will give his people in the Heavens) thou shouldst flatly say, that thou believest no such thing, and that there will be the same end to the righteous & to the wicked. If this thou shouldst affirm, I

I would confidently pronounce thy condition desperate; for he that readeth in Scripture the Testimony of Jesus the Son of God, affirming, that he came from Heaven, with an intent to reach us the way thither; and to die to make our peace with the God of Heaven, and to sanctifie us, that thereby he might prepare us for Heaven, and that he will come again and fetch our whole man to Heaven, and seal this doctrine with wonders in Heaven and earth, and with innumerable miracles, being himself filled with the Spirit of the Lord; to that end and filling his Apostles with the same Spirit of wisdom and power to reach the same doctrine and work the like wonders; he I say; that shall read all this, and have the Testimonies of the Churches of Christ in all ages to confirm the truth of all this; not only by a profession of their faith herein with their mouths, but likewise sealing it with their blood; and yet shall deny or disbelieve the truth thereof, must needs be a desperate willful blind sinner; for such do either make God the Father and his Son Lyars; in as much as they believe not the Testimony God hath given thereof by his Son; or else they must account the generations of the righteous in all ages of the Church, who have avowed the truth thereof to the death, to be a company of ignorant, silly, worse than brutish men to expose their lives, and all their earthly felicity to destruction for a fancy or a groundless figment; which none can suffer themselves to think, but such as by the notorious villany of their hearts and lives, have laid all principles of reason and religion wast, which speaks them reprobates

But



But this sayst thou, is not my case, I hope it is not, God forbid it should. Well, but what is thy case then?

It is this, though (sayst thou) my reason is satisfied in the truth and reasonableness of the Christian Religion, and particularly of the truth of this promise of Eternal Life; yet I find very frequently in my thoughts a certain buzzing of scrupulous Questions: what if it should be otherwise? how if both thy self and all thy fellow Christians should be mistaken? what if Heaven should prove a fiction? how could these Questions rise if I did indeed believe the truth of these things?

I answer; These tempting suggestions if in the least they sadden thee, they are signs thy faith is not perfect, but they are no arguments that thou hast no faith: Surely *Peter* had faith and a strong faith too in Jesus Christ, when he dared to venture at his command to come out of the Ship and walk upon the Sea; and yet when he saw the storm encrease, he doubted; and yet his doubt did not destroy his faith; for at the same time, though he was through fear sinking, yet he could believe that Christ could save him; *Master* (says he) *help me*: Tell me, hast thou not at the command of Christ, and through the belief of his promise, ventured upon a sea of troublesome duties and temptations? hast thou not repented of sin, mortified thy flesh crucified the lusts thereof? hast thou not denied thy self and taken up the Cross and followed him? yea, sayst thou, I have. I tell thee then, thou hast ventured upon as great difficulties as *Peter* did, when he went out

out of the Ship on the Sea, and greater too ; and if he could, not have done the one, so neither couldst thou the other without a strong faith. And what if sometimes such sinking Questions do arise ? dost thou not cry out with *Peter* to thy Jesus, *Lord save me* ? and hast thou not experienced likewise with him, that Christ thereupon hath raised thee above thy sinking fears ? and if so, what reason hast thou to doubt of thy faith any more than thou dost of *Peters* ?

But yet I say further, though thou mayst find many of thy Brethren more confident in believing of the promises than thy self ; yet consider, that faith may be as truly and really in thee as them ; it may be of the same kind with theirs, though not of the same degree : faith as other things is capable of growth and increase ; there is a going on to perfection as well in believing as in other graces, and in graces as well as in other knowledges, arts and mysteries : he that can read his Letters or his Primer, hath not presently arrived to the top of Learning. I say then, some have more perfect knowledge in the mystery of the revealed will of God, and more perfect understanding of the wisdom, power, grace, faithfulness of God and his Son, and consequently of the stability of every word of promise, and some less : but it is certain every true believer is to that degree perswaded of the truth of the whole, as that he is thereby powerfully carried forth to break off his sin by repentance, and to purifie his heart, and to esteem of all the sinful pleasures of this life as dross and dung, to despise and trample on them, as matters standing

in his way to Eternal life; and this is sufficient to speak their faith sound, though it may be incumbered with some weakneses.

But I further adde, that in those unbelieving scruples, there may be as much, if not more of the Devil than the infidelity of thy heart; That prince of darkness being thrown out of thy heart his ancient possession; though he never shall re-enter more, yet he will not fail to trouble thee with a Siege; though he cannot batter down thy Castle walls, or unhinge, or burn down those everlasting doors of thy heart, wheréat the King of glory hath entered, and have been ever since shut against this despised Tyrant, yet he can lie without and throw the granadoes of temptations, and shoot his fiery darts over the walls, which though they may startle and affright thee, yet they shall do thee little harm; and of such a nature may be these unbelieving scruples thou complainest of. And besides this, he hath other fetches of policy to beget a difference betwixt thy soul and Christ, now become the Governour of that Royal Fort: Sometimes he will suggest, that your Lord Jesus is gone, and who knows what is become of him; or perhaps he is amongst the dead whom you imagine to be on his throne in Heaven; or that all your hazards and engagements for him are in vain; for either you shall be forced to yield to the battery of his temptations, and submit to the law of sin in spite of your hearts, and the auxiliaries of your imagined Christ, or else he will have your lives and all you are worth, and then will upbraid you, and say, what have you now to boast of in your Christ and

his promises? how many men and their families have I ruin'd by persecutions because they would not yield? and who when you have lost all, will make you amends? Are you not fools to lose all in this world for an imagined Paradise in another; part with things that you see and enjoy for things that you never saw, and so it's uncertain whether they are or no. Thus like *Sennacherib* doth he defie the Host of *Israel*, and the God of that Host; and perhaps thou being ignorant of *Satans* devices in all this, art apt to charge it all on thy self, and this he is apt enough to perswade thee to; for when he cannot perswade thee by these threatnings to yield, then he charges thee with all these mutinous and rebellious counsels of thy heart, when indeed they are none but his own, because thy heart doth always contradict them, defie them as most blasphemous.

In this case, be not discouraged, only defie these motions, and cry mightily to the Lord thy Saviour to help thee against this mighty potent one; tell him his honour is engaged, and ask thy Lord how he can be silent to see his glorious Name blasphemed by the Adversary; pray him to arise and make bare his arm, and show himself strong in rebuking this Evil one, for the poor of the earth that put their trust under the shadow of his wings. Assure thy self he will at length arise, he will break that hissing Serpents head, and turn his counsels into folly, only hold thou fast and be true to Christ, and resolve to die rather than to yield. For Christ thy Lord permits all this for the tryal of thy faith, and love, and patience,

that

that when these graces are tryed and found sincere, they may be crowned with honour, glory, and immortality: Bear up poor drooping soul; say not, thou art conquer'd, because thou hast an Enemy in the Field against thee; say not, that thou hast no faith, because thy faith is batter'd with temptations; for if it bears the battery and yields not up to Satan, it is a sign not only that thou hast faith, but that thy faith is strong: for what greater argument that the walls of a Castle are strong, than this; that it can receive a thousand Canon shot into it, and yet stand firm in defiance of the Enemy; so if thy faith holds out in temptations, there is no greater argument of its strength.

To shut up my answer to this doubt of thine, take this advice; Dost thou find thy self frequently from time to time prest with these unbelieving suggestions, as what if there be no God, or Christ, or Heaven? what if all Religion is but a dream? I have already told thee how unreasonable groundless scruples they are, but if they will not hear reason, take then up the resolution of Queen *Hester*, when she knew her approach to the King would prove difficult and dangerous; yet knowing if she went not, she and her people were all like to be destroyed? Well (says she) I will venture to go into his presence, and if I perish, I perish.

So thou trembling Soul, take courage to thy Faith, tell Satan thou wilt believe, and if thou perishest therein, yet thou art resolved there to perish; tell that Serpent, that though he spits out all the poison of his venomous tongue he can



against thy God, thy Saviour, and his Kingdom ;  
 though he be so impudent as to tell thee there  
 are no such things, and that it is thy folly to  
 give credit to such dreams ; yea, tell thy trai-  
 terous flesh (that is apt enough to confederate  
 with the Devil, and to conclude all is true the  
 Devil says, because it cannot see nor feel such  
 things) that thou art resolved to believe and to  
 live as one that believeth such things in holiness  
 and righteousness, tell them, that though they  
 may fright thee, yet they shall not make thee fly ;  
 though they may foil thee, yet they shall not  
 fling thee ; tell them, thou wilt not let go the  
 hopes of a life of glory, for all this world, and a  
 thousand worlds as good as this : and if this is to  
 be deceived, thou art resolved to be deceived ;  
 for come what will of it, thou art resolved to die  
 in the Faith thereof : be not daunted with these  
 temptations, answer them not timourously, but  
 with courage ; that proud Prince of Darknes if  
 he cannot subdue thee, yet he glories to see thee  
 sneak before him ; this is to resist the Devil,  
 and this is the way to put him to flight ; this is to  
 adde to your faith, vertue or courage, so it may  
 be translated which the Apostle commands ; and  
 assure thy self, that such is the great power of  
 faith, assisted by the Spirit of God, whose assis-  
 stance thou needst not doubt ; that as it can pu-  
 rifie the heart, and get a victory over the world,  
 and flesh, so it can subdue the Devil, and bear  
 off as a Shield all the fiery Darts of that  
 malicious One. And thus much for this Ob-  
 jection.



11. *The eleventh pretended Ground of fear.*

But after all this, if my heart is not pure, and my conversation holy, I am sure I shall never see God with any comfort; for Christ hath promised the blessedness of seeing God to none but such. Is not Heaven a Kingdom into which no unclean thing shall enter? and how dare I then think of dying, and appearing before such a Holy, Holy, Holy God, with such an unholy heart as mine is! Alas, how little is my grace in compare to what others have! most of my holiness lies in a desire to be Holy; I can from my heart say, there is nothing in the world I desire more than to be more like my Saviour! but how short do I fall of the rule and of my desires? I have not that sovereignty over my senses; nor are my fleshly affections brought into such subjection, nor my worldly desires so crucified as becomes a Saint; my walkings with God are very uneven, and the distempers of my heart so great, and so frequent, that if there be any grace within, alas, how hard is it to see it for the sin that doth then accompany it? and how should such an one as I dare to think of dying?

*Ans.* This is a weighty Point, and believe it, I shall not flatter thee; soft words misplaced will as soon kill souls as hard blows will bodies, to presume of being saved by believing in Christ without a Gospel conformity to him in holiness, is a rock upon which ten thousands of wretched deluded souls split and sink themselves in perdition.

To make thy case then no better nor worse than it is ; Know this, that without holiness it is impossible to please God. Heaven is the inheritance of the Saints in light, and there can be no Saint without holiness. Christ died, but to save none but such that should in time be regenerate by the washing of Water and the renewing of the Spirit. No souls can live in Heaven, but such in whom the Spirit of God lived while they were on Earth. You may as well conceive how darkness should dwell in the body of the Sun as a filthy soul lodge or fix in the Kingdom of the Holy God ; there is no fearful, nor liar, nor unbeliever, nor abominable person enter that Holy City. (*Revel.*) Mount Sion hath room for the Spirits of just men, but not unjust to dwell in : where should the children of darkness go when they depart hence, but into the Kingdom of darkness, that is, Hell ? whither should heavy dull muddy things tend but downwards ? and such are unholy souls, which are as unfit to inhabit Heaven, as dirt and dung to take up their dwelling in the Air ; and whither should the more pure Elements, as Fire and Air tend but upwards ? and such are those souls that are refined with the Fire of the Spirit, and Light of the Word, from the secularity of fleshly affections ; and whither should they mount at death, but upwards to Heaven their proper place and center, where they shall ever rest ?

But yet I do not think that all souls that quit our coast, and sail into the boundless Ocean of the other heavenly world were all equally holy,  
and

and to the same degree purged from the fleshiness whilst they stayed here; nor do I think is the same degree of holiness expected in all as some.

For some have had more time than others to purifie themselves; the old Saint should be the best Saint. Old Saint *Paul* by right should know more, and have stronger graces than young *Timothy*, he had been longer in the fire, and therefore ought to have less dross than the other; he had been in more trials, and had gathered more experiences of the ways of God; and therefore in likelihood more confirmed in them than the other.

Again, some have more means of grace than others, and according to the proportion of the means afforded, God expects an answerable improvement in grace for which those means were to serve: the equal Lord did not expect an equal gain from him that had but two talents, as from him that had five. Some have more able and more holy Ministers than others, some more holy Relations, Friends and Neighbours than others, who are more frequently seasoning them with holy Examples, holy Discourses, than those whose Ministers, or Relations, or Friends are more carnal or less holy, and it were a wonder if the former should not outgrow the later.

Yet again, some have better parts, a purer mold, a finer metall for the Spirit and the Word to work upon; some have their faculties of soul more large, more capacious, others are of a nature more dull and stupid. And though the Spirit of God is omnipotent, and is able to overcome all indispositions of nature, yet his or-

inary course is to work according to the several capacities of the creatures. Some glasses are christal, some of a courser mettall; both may be wash'd clean, but the chrystal shall look more pure and bear a better gloss. Some souls are like Silver, others as Lead, they may both be purged of dross, both scoured bright; but the polish'd Silver will certainly out-shine the Lead.

Nor is it the will of God, but that some of his Saints should be more excellent than others: he never intended in the mystical body of his Son any more than in the natural body, but that the eyes should be more fair and clear than the fingers or toes. In framing of this world, he made divers bodies; but so as one should excell the other in glory; all the Stars are not of an equal magnitude, all the Lights of Heaven are not the two great Lights; nor of those two great Lights is the Moon so bright as the Sun. In the highest Heavens there are many Angels, but not all of the same degree; there are Angels, and Princes of Angels, Archangels, Principalities, Powers, Dominions, some of a higher, some of a lower degree; wonder not then, if there be a great variety found in his Family on Earth, and amongst his own choice people.

Thou sayst I know not, believe not, love not God, delight not in him to that degree as some others do: It may be so; but what if your knowledge, faith, love, delight, be not so great as others, yet it may be as true and real as that of others; there is as true and real light in a Star as in the Sun it self; the Silver is as true Silver in

a penny as in a crown, but there is not so much of it. What would you all be the eye in the body of Christ? where should be the feet? all cannot be as wise as their Teachers, your parts will not reach it; you would have as admiring thoughts of God, and Christ, and the Gospel, as those that understand those mysteries most: alas! that is impossible; for as your parts may not be capable of the comprehension of those mysteries, as others are; and you can admire them to no higher a degree than you comprehend them; and consequently the splendour of thy holiness will hold proportion to thy spiritual comprehensions. Satisfie thy self then, thou poor drooping Soul, that though the beauties of thy holiness doth not shine as others; yet consider such may be the weakness of the parts, such may be the smallness of the means of grace; so few may be thy talents, that God expects not so much of thee; and if he will not be satisfied with what thou hast, why shouldst thou be disquieted?

Nor yet would I have thee hereby take encouragement to indulge thy self in a spiritual laziness, as to tell thy soul, that thou art holy enough for the office of that member which thou holdest in the body of Christ, and so sit still in a neglect of the utmost improvement of the means as to attain to that degree of grace thy nature here is capable of; for there are no parts almost so dull but they may be somewhat heightened, nor no grace whilst we are here, but it may be increased; though thou mayst never be able to attain to be a Star of the greatest magnitude, yet thou must be a Child of Light, and thy light must shine in a  
holy

holy conversation, yea and must increase more and more until it comes to a perfect day. Though all Saints are as Glasses, yet all are not *Venice* Glasses, so clear and glasse; some are of a coarser mettall, but yet they are all washt clean and kept clean.

*Obj.* You have said enough, I thought it would come to that; I dare not say I am a Child of Light; alas! how full of darkness is my soul, I think my self more ignorant than any man, and besides my heart and life, O how unclean are they?

*Ans.* Either thou speakest true or false of thy self; if false, why art thou such an enemy to thy own peace, as to prove thy own false accuser? why wilt thou slander the works of the Holy Ghost, and deny the gifts and graces, or at least undervalue them that God hath bestowed on thee? How ignorantly and unthankfully dost thou speak, to say, I see not when thou seest, I live not when God hath quickned thee, I am blind, poor, naked and miserable, when Christ hath enlightened thee, clothed, enriched thee with his love and righteousness; this is a great sin take heed of it: for why should it not be as great a sin to bear false witness against thy self as against thy neighbour?

But if thou speakest true, tel me then what thou meanest when thou sayest thou art one of an unclean heart and life: Tell me, Art thou as the swine wallowing in the mire of sin? are the thoughts and practise of iniquity both thy trade and thy delight? dost thou inwardly despise God and his holy Commandments? are the ways of God grievous, and his works burdensom to thee? and hast thou cast them off?

Oh



Oh no, I dare not (for all the world) say so of my self. God knows, I do in some measure love him, and sometimes delight in him and his commandments; sin is my greatest fear, and greatest burden, and yet I feel such strong inclinations in my nature to evil when suggested, that I fear my nature is not sanctified. Oh how much ado have I daily to keep from sinning, though I watch and pray against it, yet how often am I surprized and fall into it.

The case then is this, thou fearest thy condition is sad, because thou art not perfectly holy; but canst thou tell me who is or ever was so since the Fall, except the Son of God: Perfect holiness and perfect happiness are the Prerogatives-royal of heaven; that sweet Rose & fair Lilly grow only on the mountain of God, Mount Sion, and not on this fenny bottom where we live: perfection indeed therein, is to be our aim, but is never like to be any of our attainment till we be translated.

Thou sayst thou art dayly tempted to sin; and who is not; was not the Son of God tempted as we are? O but sayst thou, I have much ado to resist the temptations! Christ knows as much, and therefore it is said, that he pities the tempted (*Heb. 2. 18, 19.*) and not only so, he is not only merciful to thee in such a condition, but is able to succour thee; and hast thou not found his succours almost as frequent as the temptation? O but I find inclinations of my heart to close with the temptation! It may be so, that thy flesh is willing to yield; and what wonder, when the Apostle says, *I know that in me, (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.* But thy spirit opposeth  
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and will not yield; But tell me, why should not your soul or spirit be as willing to yield, but because of that grace that therein is seated? do not the spirits of carnal unregenerate men yield to sin as well as their flesh? O but sometimes my spirit yields likewise, and I am led captive to the law of sin and death: Doth it so? but it is well it is but sometimes; but why doth it not always? if it were not sanctified, it would be seldom but it would yield: dost thou not see how like slaves the unregenerate world follow the lure of the Devil and flesh day after day; such are they of whom the Apostle speaketh, whose eyes were full of Adultery and could not cease from sin. But again, art thou sometimes overcome? it was, it may be against thy will, upon a surprize, as *Peter* when he denyed his Master; the amazement of his Masters being at the Bar, his own fear and the sudden unexpected Question of the Damosel surprized him, confounded him; he was not himself, he spoke he knew not what; sometimes thou art overtaken, thou sleepest, but recoverest thy self; Christ hath prayed that thou fallest not, he raiseth thee up by repentance, and by faith in the blood of Christ, sets thee on thy feet again. Is it so with the carnal unregenerate world? no, quite contrary, they are always reeling like drunken men, and now they fall into one sin, then into another, there they lie and tumble like swine in mire, and scarce ever think of rising up and getting out; for it's a sensual life that pleaseth them, and they had rather be down than up; nay, they are angry with any that advise them to rise: But so it is not with thee, thank God it is not, nothing

nothing but grace in thy soul puts the difference betwixt thee and them; fear not then poor drooping heart to acknowledge that grace which God hath given thee, and let not God lose the glory of the gifts; it is an earnest-penny he hath given thee of the whole inheritance: fear not then, but that when thy Holy Father calls by death thy sanctified soul hence, but that he will give it an inheritance in the Heavens with the sanctified.

*The Last pretended Ground of fear.*

Though by your reasonings you seem to leave me nothing of Reason against my self, or my interest in that blessed Kingdom; yet after all, I cannot find my self dispossessed of jealousies, that it may not be well with me at that strict Tribunal; and how can I then but fear to die? Tell me, what if I die doubting of my condition, and with fear and trembling depart this life, will not my doubtings provoke the most Holy God, and prove my confusion when I make my appearance before Him?

*Ans.* If thou hast that faith and holiness which I spoke to in my answer to the two last doubts, I tell thee thou hast then no reason to die doubting of thy condition: Yet if thy doubts and jealousies will yet abide, thou hast little reason to regard them. **Fears**  
and

and jealousies about the attainment of a felicity we much desire; if it be a distemper, it is become so natural to us all, that it is almost incurable in this present state.

Though several of the Lords people are enriched with that great blessing of assurance; yet which of them (think you) enjoy that jewel without all flaw of doubt or scruple? If no man hath grace in perfection, who is it can glory of a perfect assurance? is there any thing perfectly known in an imperfect state? if nothing, how then should the knowledge of a mans salvation, which is something surely, and a great one too?

I pray you, how many can say they are as sure of Heaven as they are, that are in it? Is it not enough if we are so sure of it, as that we have no good reason why we should doubt it? To doubt or fear ones salvation without cause, is childish, not manly; and to take notice of such fears is but to trifle.

But sayst thou, be these fears childish and trifling, or what you please to call them? I am sure I cannot be rid of them, and they create me much trouble.

I can easily believe they do create trouble to thee; but let me tell thee, God would not have thee troubled; and therefore since there is no cause for troubles, be not so childish to admit them: I would to God I was rid of them; but what if I live and die with them? will they not provoke the Lord, and put all to the hazard?

To tell thee they do not displease God, I dare not; for they are thy sinful imperfections; but to say they will hazard all, I may not; for certainly God will never damn a believing sanctified soul; let such an one think what he please of himself; though thou dost not know for certain that thou art his, yet God knows all that are his, and *not one of them shall perish.*

Many a melancholy sick man hath fancied his sickness to be the plague, but his skilful Physician will not therefore presently send him to the Pesthouse, for he knows it is otherwise.

Many a man hath been sick and fancied he should die, but he hath recovered; thy melancholy jealous soul thinks every distemper of heart the Plague of a hard unregenerate heart that will certainly bring thee to Hell. But Jesus Christ the Physician, knows it is no such matter, he knows thou wilt do well enough what ever thou mayst fear.

What man was ever dispossessed of his inheritance, because he causlessly scrupled his title to it? and yet it is possible to work up such a melancholy person to a willingness to resign. But let me tell thee, if the Devil, thy adversary should so work on thee by temptations, as first to scruple thy title to Heaven, and afterward bring thee to a willingness to resign; Jesus Christ would put a demur in the case; for he will not suffer such poor innocents to be wronged.

If

If Christ knows thou hast grace, and so a title to Heaven, he will neither suffer thee, nor the Devil to wrangle thee out of it: if he justifies thee, it is not in thy own no more than in the Devils power to condemn thee.

Put then the case, that thou shouldst die doubting, and that thy soul should set in a cloud of fears; it hinders not but it may arise in a world of glory, and have a fair morning. What if all this life is spent in sowing in tears? it follows not, but that in the other thou mayst reap in joy: it is Heaven that is only priviledged from tears, and why not then from fears?

It was but the night before Christ dyed, that he went into the Garden full of fears; and it was but as it were a moment before his giving up the Ghost, that he endured the Eclipse of his Fathers presence: I dare not say that his fears arose from the same causes as thine do; for he knew well enough when he came, and whither he was going; but this I say, that thou oughtest not to wonder if he suffer thee to go trembling out of this world, when he suffered his Beloved Son to go out in such a dismal eclipse.

Once more: Thou art very fearful of thy fears; But peradventure they are no more than what should be: A holy fear moderated, a holy shamefastness to appear in the presence of so glorious a God, provided it be not slavish, it may be thy duty and not thy sin: The  
work



work is great thou art about; thou art about to die and to appear before the Tribunal of the judge of quick and dead; and who can prepare for so great a solemnity without a godly fear and holy trembling.

The most innocent person may look pale, and his heart tremble when he is to answer for his life, before the Tribunal of men? but what is the Majesty of an earthly compared to that of the Heavenly Court? and what is a pleading for a natural life in compare to a being put to a defense for an Eternal life.

Besides, doth not the Holy Ghost lay it upon us all as a command to work out our salvation with fear and trembling: and when is it quite wrought out but at death? a holy fear and trembling ought then to keep that work company till it be finished; and if so, thou oughtest not to be so fearful of thy fears, but rather thank God that hath given thee such serious and weighty apprehensions fixed to so great a work as this of thy salvation is: it is a sign thou hast wrought in good earnest and not in jest.

What is it ruins so many Professors but their trifling in this great work, they do not tremble to think of miscarrying.

And Lastly, if thou searchest the Scriptures

thou wilt find that the most beloved Disciple are the most gracious, are presented to us as the most humble, modest, and sometimes scrupulous souls. The Eleven questioned whether they were not the men that should betray Christ, but *Judas* said nothing. The poor Publican he went full of shame before the Lord to beg for mercy; it was the Pharisee that was impudent.

*Paul* thought himself less than the least of Saints; and *Jacob* confest he was unworthy of the least of mercies.

The Children of the Kingdom are all modest, they admire that God should ever think of bestowing such glory on them, when, say they, did we see thee hungry, or naked, or in prison, as to feed, and cloath, and visit thee; they set not so great a price on their love to his people, as Christ did, who looks upon all these acts as done to himself: they are the ungodly in that day of judgement that impudently demand Heaven as a debt; *Have we not prophesied in thy Name, and done many wonderful works.* They thought Christ should injure them if he denied them an entrance into his Kingdom; but he would dismount all their confidence, with an *I know ye not ye workers of iniquity.*

Be not then deject thou fearful scrupulous soul, it is not thy merits, but the free and rich grace of God must save thee: thou hast

a Gracious Father to be thy Judge, and a most Compassionate Saviour, thy Elder Brother to be thy Advocate, and the most Holy Gracious Spirit of God that dwells within thee to be thy Witness; thou art to be tried not by a rigorous Law, but the Law of the Covenant of grace, that will certainly acquit every poor humble, modest, penitent believing soul, and thine is such. *Return therefore to thy rest; for God will assuredly deal bountifully with thee.*

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**FINIS.**

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